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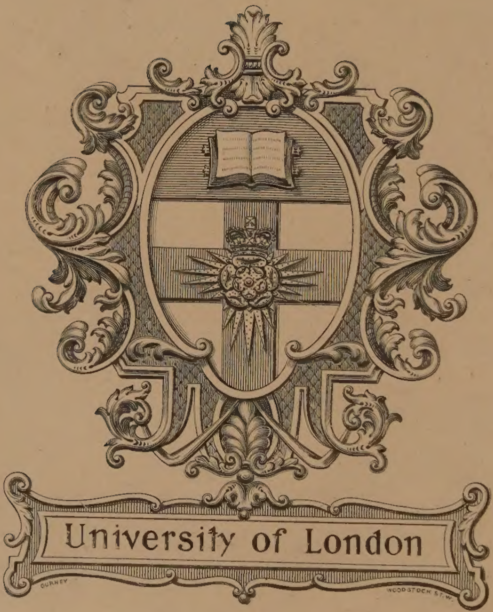

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(AUTHORISED EDITION),

FOURTH SERIES

THIRD SESSION OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE
UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

8 EDWARD VII.

VOLUME CLXXXIX.

COMPRISING PERIOD FROM TUESDAY, NINETEENTH DAY OF MAY, 1908, TO TUESDAY, SECOND DAY OF JUNE, 1908.

SEVENTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

1908.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED,
UNDER CONTRACT WITH HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE,
BY
WYMAN AND SONS, LIMITED, FETTER LANE, LONDON.

8472

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THE PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY contains all that can be collected of the Legislative History of this country from the Conquest to the close of the XVIIIth Century (1803), 36 vols. The chief sources whence these Debates are derived are the Constitutional History, 24 vols.; Sir Simonds D'Ewes' Journal; Debates of the Commons in 1620 and 1621; Chandler and Timberland's Debates, 22 vols.; Grey's Debates of the Commons, from 1667 to 1694, 10 vols.; Almon's Debates, 24 vols.; Debrett's Debates, 63 vols.; The Hardwicke Papers; Debates in Parliament by Dr. Johnson, &c., &c.

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Garw and Ogmore Gas (re-committed) Bill; London County Council (General Powers) Bill; St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time ... 49

Divorce Bills.—Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Joseph Leese, Mr. Solicitor-General, Sir D. Brynmor Jones, Sir Edward Carson, Mr. G. Cave, and Mr. Solicitor-General for Ireland were nominated Members of the Select Committee on Divorce Bills.—(*Secretary Sir Edward Grey*) 49

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 49

STANDING ORDERS.—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee.

Resolutions agreed to.

Private Bills Group F.—Ordered, That Frank Treharne James do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills To morrow, at Two of the Clock... 49

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [Lords] 50

Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 50

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—8 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 50

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—18 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table... 50

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—18 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 50

Licensing Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. 4 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 70 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 51

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—18 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 51

Port of London Bill.—Petition for the Regent's Canal and Dock Company against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill 51

Public Houses (Exclusion of Children) (Scotland) Bill.— Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 51

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 51

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RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Railway Returns (Preliminary Statement).—To lie upon the Table ... 52

Trade (Foreign Countries and British Possessions).—Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions; to lie upon the Table 52

Aliens Act, 1905.—Second Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector under the Aliens Act; to lie upon the Table 52

Corporal Punishment.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 147] 52

Navy (Hydrographer's Report).—Report on Admiralty Surveys; to lie upon the Table 52

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 3996; to lie upon the Table 52

East Indian Loans [Railway and Irrigation Works].—Committee to consider of authorising the Secretary of State in Council of India to raise money in the United Kingdom, on the security of the Revenues of India, for the construction, extension, and equipment of Railways in India by State agency or through the agency of companies, and for the construction of Irrigation Works (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—(*Secretary Sir Edward Grey*) 52

Naval Casualties.—Return ordered 53

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Duty on Irish-Grown Tobacco 53
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Drainage of the Barrow 86
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Empire Day 87
The Public Trustee 90

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Ferries (Ireland) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A. Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed [No. 148.] Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 148.] Bill (as amended in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 231] 90

POLICE FORCES (WEEKLY REST DAY).—Ordered that Mr. Charles Duncan be discharged from the Select Committee on Police Forces (Weekly Rest-Day). Ordered, that Mr. William Edwin Harvey be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 90

Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.—Mr. Akers-Douglas, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, and Mr. Morton nominated Members of the Select Committee on the Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 90

COMMONS.—Mr. Carr-Gomm, Mr. Cowan, Mr. Winfrey, Mr. Lardner, Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, Mr. Hicks Beach, and Mr. Arkwright, nominated Members on the Select Committee on Commons.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 91

MONUMENT TO SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.—Resolution reported; "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying that His Majesty will give directions that a Monument be erected in the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster, to the memory of the late Right Honourable Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, with an inscription expressive of the high sense entertained by this House of the eminent services rendered by him to the Country in Parliament and in great offices of State, and to assure His Majesty that this House will make good the expenses attending the same." Resolution agreed to. Address to be presented by Privy Councillors and Members of His Majesty's Household 91

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [18th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Lord Balcarres*).

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Sir J. Compton Rickett (*Yorkshire, W.R., Osgoldcross*) 91
Mr. F. E. Smith (*Liverpool, Walton*) 96
Mr. Adkins (*Lancashire, Middleton*) 108
Mr. Dillon (*Mayo, E.*) 116
Mr. G. Greenwood (*Peterborough*) 123
Lord R. Cecil (*Marylebone, E.*) 129
The President of the Board of Education (*Mr. Runciman, Dewsbury*) ... 137
Sir William Anson (*Oxford University*) 153
Mr. Yoxall (*Nottingham, W.*) 159
Mr. H. Gooch (*Camberwell, Peckham*) 162
Sir G. Scott Robertson (*Bradford, Central*) 169
Mr. Boland (*Kerry, S.*) 172
Mr. Evelyn Cecil (*Aston Manor*) 178
Mr. W. Pearce (*Tower Hamlets, Limehouse*) 183
Mr. Wyndham (*Dover*) 186
The Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education (*Mr. McKinnon Wood, Glasgow, St. Rollox*) 192
Mr. Bridgeman (*Shropshire, Oswestry*) 197
Mr. Belloc (*Salford, S.*) 199

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

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EMPLOYMENT OF MILITARY IN CASES OF DISTURBANCES.—Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed (1) to inquire into the power possessed by Civil Authorities to obtain Military aid in the suppression of Disturbance, and to consider whether those powers ought to be subjected to any and what modification or restriction; (2) further to inquire into the duties and responsibilities now attaching to Military officers in these cases, and to consider whether it is expedient that these duties and responsibilities should be further defined.

Committee accordingly nominated of,—Sir Frederick Banbury, Mr. Chance, Mr. Curran, Mr. Devlin, Mr. Lambton, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Paulton, Mr. Albert Stanley, and Mr. Middlebrook.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease*) 202

EMPIRE DAY.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) 203

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 204

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at thirteen minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: WEDNESDAY, 20TH MAY, 1908.

The Lord Crawshaw sat first in Parliament after the death of his father ... 205

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.—Report from.
Read, and agreed to 205

Barry Railway Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 205

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill; Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction Railway; Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction Railway; and East and West Junction Railway (Amalgamation) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments ... ... — 205

Bristol Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill; Upton Town Hall Bill [H.L.]; Rochester Bridge Bill [H.L.]—Reported, with Amendments 205

Knott End Railway Bill; Dartford Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Dundalk Urban District Council Bill.—Reported, without Amendment 205

Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments. The said Amendments considered, and agreed to 206

North Eastern Railway Bill.—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The Orders made on 13th and 14th May last discharged, and Bill committed for Wednesday next 206

Tollemache Estate Bill [H.L.]; Leeds Corporation Bill; Cheshire Lines Committee Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed 206

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Margate Corporation Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 206

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L]; Llanelly and Burry Port Water Board Bill [H.L].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Saye and Sele be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Earl of Albemarle; read and agreed to 206

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Lord Haversham be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bill in the place of the Lord Kintore (*E. Kintore*); and that the Lord Haversham be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to 206

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª (according to order) 206

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—No. 3999. Siam 206

India (Railways).—Report of the Committee on Indian Railway Finance and Administration 207

Railway Returns.—Return relating to the railways of the United Kingdom.—Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie upon the Table ... 207

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Joint Committee (with proceedings of the Committee) made, and to be printed. (No. 73.)

Bill reported with Amendments; and committed to a Committee of the Whole House, and to be printed as amended. (No. 74.) 207

Port of London Bill.—Order of the Day read for the consideration of Commons' Message.

The Chairman of Committees (*The Earl of Onslow*) 207

Moved, "That the Commons Message be considered."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

The Earl of Camperdown 208
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 210

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Moved, "That a Committee of Five Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider the said Bill."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

The Duke of Marlborough... 211

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying for Papers relating to the recent changes which have been made in the tariffs of the self-governing Colonies for promoting their economic development and the extension of their trade relations with the United Kingdom and foreign countries."—(*The Duke of Marlborough.*)

Earl Cromer 221
Viscount Ridley 236
Viscount Wolverhampton 241
Viscount Milner 245

Moved, "That the debate be adjourned."—(*Lord Avebury.*)

On Question, debate adjourned till to-morrow, the debate to have precedence of other business.

Statute Law Revision Bill [H.L].—Read 2ª (according to order). Then it was moved to resolve, That it is desirable that the said Bill be referred to the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament to which the Companies (Consolidation) Bill [H.L.] and the Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.] are to be referred (*The Lord Chancellor*); agreed to: ordered that a Message be sent to the Commons to communicate this Resolution and desire their concurrence 257

County Courts Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order). Amendments (Privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons 258

Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill [H.L.].—The Lords following were named of the Select Committee, viz.—

D. Bedford.	L. O'Hagan.
D. Rutland.	L. Avebury.
M. Bristol.	

The Committee to appoint their own chairman... 258

House adjourned at half-past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow half-past ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, WEDNESDAY, 20TH MAY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Argentine North-Eastern Railway Bill [LORDS.]—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 258

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; an Amendment made; Bill to be read the third time 258

Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 258

London United Tramways Bill.—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed... 258

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to: Rochdale Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

Amendments to: Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

Statute Law Revision Bill [LORDS].—That they have come to the following Resolution, viz., "That it is expedient that the Statute Law Revision Bill be referred to the same Joint Committee to which the Post Office Consolidation Bill and the Companies (Consolidation) Bill are to be referred ... 258

PETITIONS.

Building Lands (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 259

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 259

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 259

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Education (Scotland) Bill.—3 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table 259

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 259

Licensing Bill.—4 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table 2 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 69 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 259

Licensing Bill and Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 260

Lights on Vehicles (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 260

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—4 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 46 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 260

Maji, Subramania Katto Pommin Naiak.—Petition of Subramania Katto Pommin Naiak Maji, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table ... 260

Open Spaces (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 260

Police Superannuation (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 260

Port of London Bill.—Petition of the Wandsworth and Putney Gas Light and Coke Company, against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill 260

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National Debt.—Return presented, to lie upon the Table 261

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, No. 3999; to lie upon the Table 261

Paper laid upon the Table by the Clerk of the House.—Temporary Laws. —Register of Temporary Laws for the Third Session, Twenty-eighth Parliament, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, to be printed [No. 149] 261

Rifle Associations (Colonies) (Grants).—Address for "Return of the amounts of the Grants made during each of the last five years by Colonial Governments to Rifle Associations for the encouragement of Rifle shooting, and for the maintenance and expenses of Colonial representative Rifle teams."—(*Mr. Courthope.*) 261

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Congested Districts Board Expenditure 264
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Armagh Laundry Prosecutions 303
Royal Hibernian Academy 304
Natal Act of Indemnity 304
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NEW BILLS.

National Flag.

Captain Craig (*Down, E.*) 306

Motion made and Question put, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the due display of the National Flag on certain occasions in Great Britain and Ireland, more particularly on Empire Day."—(*Captain Craig.*)

The House divided :—Ayes, 88 ; Noes 156. (Division List No. 99)

Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Amendment Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 232.] 311

Local Taxation, National Debt, and Assessors [Payments].—Committee to consider of authorising the payment of an annual sum, out of the Consolidated Fund, to the Local Taxation Account, and of increased allowances to Assessors of Taxes, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, and of authorising the application of the surplus of income over expenditure for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1908, (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow —(*Mr. Hobhouse*) 311

Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords].—Report in respect of the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords] (pending in the Lords), with Minutes of Evidence, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 150.] 311

Public Petitions Committee.—Third Report brought up, and read ; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 311

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Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [18th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Lord Balcarres.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question.'"

Mr. Belloc (Salford, S.) 312
Colonel R. Williams (Dorsetshire, W.) 315
Mr. T. P. O'Connor (Liverpool, Scotland) 320
Sir George White (Norfolk, N.W.) 330
Sir John Kennaway (Devonshire, Honiton) 337
Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 337
Mr. Ellis Griffith (Anglesey) 344
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 345
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 358

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 370; Noes, 205. (Division List No. 100.)

Main Question put, and agreed to. Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

DURATION OF SPEECHES.

Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) 371

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That no Speech by a Member, other than a member of the Government, made in the House shall exceed one half-hour in duration, except with the leave of the House granted without a negative voice, and that no speech made in Committee of the Whole House shall, subject to the same qualification, exceed a quarter of an hour; that, at the close of the said period of one half-hour or a quarter of an hour respectively, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, do take the pleasure of the House whether the member be allowed to proceed; and that this Resolution be a Standing Order of the House."—(*Mr. Rees.*)

Mr. Mallet (Plymouth) 383
Viscount Castlereagh (Maidstone) 383
The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.) 388
Mr. Stuart Wortley (Sheffield, Hallam) 391
Mr. Theodore Taylor (Lancashire, Radcliffe) 392
Mr. J. MacVeagh (Down, S.) 394
Mr. Steadman (Finsbury, Central)... 396
Sir A. Acland-Hood (Somerset, Wellington) 398
Mr. Swift MacNeill (Donegal, S.)... 400
Mr. Kettle (Tyrone, E.) 403
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 405

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Coroners (Ireland) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee 408

Adjourned at four minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: THURSDAY, 21ST MAY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [H.L.].—Presented (pursuant to leave given yesterday), and read 1ª 409

South Wales Electric Power Distribution Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments... 409

Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, without Amendment 409

Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 409

North East London Railway Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and referred to the examiners... 409

Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection 409

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]. ; Gas Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Committed 409

Gas and Water Orders Comfirmation Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Sevenoaks Water Order and the Stourbridge Water Order 409

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Potteries and North Staffordshire (Amendment) Order 409

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Bridgwater Port and Navigation Order and the Llandudno Pier Order 409

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Committed ... 419

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Light Railways Act, 1896.—Orders made by the Light Railways Commissioners 410

Mines and Quarries (General Report and Statistics, for 1907: Part I. District Statistics).—Statistics of the persons employed, output, and accidents at mines and quarries in the United Kingdom 410

Evictions (Ireland).—Return of evictions in Ireland.
Presented (by Command) and ordered to lie upon the Table... ... 410

Commons Act, 1876 (Towyn Trewan Common, Anglesey).—Report by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries upon an application for a provisional order for the regulation of Towyn Trewan Common, in the parishes of Llanfihangel-yn-nhowyn, Llechylched, and Llanfaelog, in the county of Anglesey; laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 410

Port of London Bill.—The Lords following were named of the Committee to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider the said Bill, viz. :—

V. Milner.
L. Clinton.
L. Hamilton of Dalzell
L. Leith of Fyvie.
L. Ritchie of Dundee.

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons in answer to their Message of the 14th instant, to inform them of the appointment of the said Committee by this House, and to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A on Wednesday next, at Three o'clock 411

PREFERENTIAL TRADE.—Order of the Day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Motion of the Duke of Marlborough, that an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying for Papers relating to the recent changes which have been made in the tariffs of the self-governing Colonies for promoting their economic development and the extension of their trade relations with the United Kingdom and foreign countries.

Lord Avebury 411
Viscount St. Aldwyn 419
Lord Curzon of Kedleston 433
The Marquess of Lansdowne 438
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 447

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill.—[SECOND READING].—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 460

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, THURSDAY, 21ST MAY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [LORDS] (King's Consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 460

North-East London Railway Bill.—Read the third time and passed ... 460

Divorce Bills.—Ordered, That the Order of 19th May for the nomination of the Select Committee on Divorce Bills be read, and discharged.— (*Mr. Joseph Pease*) 460

Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill (No. 2).—Presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 461

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.
Bill to be read the third time To-morrow 461

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.
Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 461

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Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments [Title amended]; Report to lie upon the Table and to be printed 461

Llanelly Gas Bill [Lords].—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 461

Merthyr Tydfil Corporation Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Section B); Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 461

Message from the Lords.—That they have agreed to Amendments to Rhymney Railway Bill [Lords], without Amendment. That they have passed a Bill, intituled, County Courts Bill [Lords].

Port of London Bill.—That they have appointed a Committee consisting of Five Lords to join with a Committee of this House to consider the Port of London Bill (pursuant to Message of this House) That they propose that the said Joint Committee do meet on Wednesday next, in Committee Room A, at Three of the Clock 461

Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power Bill.

Mr. John O'Connor (*Kildare, N.*) 462

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power Bill will be re-committed to the former Committee. —(*Mr. John O'Connor.*)

Mr. Luke White (*Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose*) 462

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill re-committed to the former Committee.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to reconsider their decision on the preamble of the Bill as reported by them to the House, except in so far as the same relates to the city of Dublin, the Urban District of Rathmines and Rathgar, the Urban District of Pembroke, and King's County.—(*Mr. John O'Connor.*)

PETITIONS.

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Licensing Bill.—7 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 5 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 56 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 463

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 26 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 464

Port of London Bill.—Petition of Sheerness Urban District Council, against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill 464

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Light Railways Act, 1896.—Orders made by the Light Railway Commissioners and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade; to lie upon the Table 465

Commons Act, 1876 (Towyn Trewan Common, Anglesey).—Report by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries upon an Application for a Provisional Order for the Regulation of Towyn Trewan Common, in the Parishes of Llanfihangel-yn-nhowyn, Llechylched, and Llanfaelog in the county of Anglesey; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed [No. 151] 465

Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) [Consolidated Fund].—Committee to consider of authorising the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the Fund of the Suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland under any Act of the present session to provide further facilities for the erection of Houses for the Working Classes in cities and towns in Ireland (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*) 466

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Education (Local Authorities) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A. Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 152.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 152.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 233] 520

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Reports to lie upon the Table 520

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NEW BILLS.

Poor Law Amendment (Scotland) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 234.] 521

Contempts of Court.

The Attorney-General for Ireland (*Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange*) ... 521

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to contempts of Court."—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

Mr. James Campbell (*Dublin University*) 524

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered, to be brought in by Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, Mr. Birrell, and Mr. Attorney-General.

Bill "To amend the Law relating to Contempts of Court," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 235.]

SUPPLY [7th ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, ESTIMATES, 1908–09.

CLASS III.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,978, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the salaries and expenses of the office of the Irish Land Commission."

Mr. John Roche (*Galway, E.*) 525

Whereupon Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,878, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. John Roche*).

Mr. Lardner (*Monaghan, N.*) 530
The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.*) 535
Mr. James Campbell (*Dublin University*) 543
Mr. Dillon (*Mayo, E.*) 549
Mr. Walter Long (*Dublin, S.*) 556
The Attorney-General for Ireland (*Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange*) ... 559
Mr. T. M. Healy (*Louth, N.*) 561
Mr. Flynn (*Cork, N.*) 565
Mr. Gordon (*Londonderry, S.*) 568
Mr. Cullinan, (*Tipperary, S.*) 570
Mr. Barrie (*Londonderry, N.*) 571
Mr. Kilbride (*Kildare, S.*) 573

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the Clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order No. 8, further proceeding was postponed without Question put.

Tyne Improvement Bill (BY ORDER).—Consideration, as amended, deferred till Thursday next, at a quarter past Eight of the Clock 577

SUPPLY (CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–09).—Postponed proceeding on Question proposed on consideration of Question, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,978, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the salaries and expenses of the office of the Irish Land Commission."

Which Question was, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,878, be granted for the said service,"—(*Mr. John Roche,*)—resumed.

Question again proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,878, be granted for the said service."

Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) in the Chair.

Mr. John Redmond (*Waterford*) 578

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CLASS II.

£120,788, to complete the sum for the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Ireland.

Mr. William Redmond (*Clare, E.*) 579
Mr. Power (*Waterford, E.*) 583
Mr. Nolan (*Louth, S.*) 585
Mr. Muldoon (*Wicklow, E.*) 587
Mr. Joyce (*Limerick*) 589
Mr. Barrie (*Londonderry, N.*) 591
Mr. J. MacVeagh (*Down, S.*) 594
Mr. Hugh Law (*Donegal, W.*) 596
Mr. Power 599
Mr. Guest (*Cardiff District*) 599
The President of the Department of Agriculture for Ireland (*Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.*) 600
Mr. William Redmond 607
Mr. Power 608
Mr. Ffrench (*Wexford, S.*)... 608

Vote agreed to.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

Port of London Bill.—Ordered, That the Lords Message [this day] relating to the time and place of meeting of the Joint Committee on the Port of London Bill be now considered.

Lords Message considered accordingly.

Ordered, That the Committee of this House do meet the Lords Committee as proposed by their Lordships.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith 608

Adjourned at six minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 22ND MAY, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill.—Read third time, and passed 609

London County Council (General Powers) Bill.—(PRINCE OF WALES' CONSENT SIGNIFIED).—Bill read the third time, and passed 609

St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill. [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed with Amendments 609

Camberwell and other Metropolitian Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [LORDS]; Doncaster Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 609

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Read the third time; and passed 609

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time upon Monday next 609

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill.—Read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 236] 609

Padiham Urban District Council Bill.—Reported with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Section A); Report to lie upon Table, and to be printed 609

South-West Suburban Water Bill.— Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 609

Private Bills (Group F).—Ordered, That Frederick E. Jacob do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills on Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock 610

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 610

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—14 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 610

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table... 610

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 610

Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 610

Licensing Bill.—5 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 48 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 610

Licensing (Scotland) Amendment Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 611

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—4 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 9 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 611

Port of London Bill.—4 Petitions against, praying to be heard by counsel: referred to the Select Committee on the Bill 611

Public-Houses (Exclusion of Children) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table... 611

Shops Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 611

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RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Magistrates (Ireland).—Return to be printed. [No. 153.] 611

University of London Act, 1898.—Amendment of Statutes of the University of London, and of Statutes for the Management of University College, London; to lie upon the Table 612

Ceylon.—Correspondence relating to the consumption of Opium in Ceylon; to lie upon the Table 612

St. Vincent.—Additional Rules made for the Government of the Prison in St. Vincent; to lie upon the Table 612

Grenada.—Prison Rule abolishing the Punishment of Cutting the Hair of Female Prisoners in Grenada; to lie upon the Table 612

Education (Scotland).—Thirty-fifth Annual Report to the Scottish Education Department; to lie upon the Table 612

Land Registry.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 154.] 612

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Payment of Balance of Purchase Money for H.M.S. "Cyclops" 612
Milk Supply Bill—Date of Introduction 613
Loans to Scottish Museums—Fire Risks 613
Registry of Deeds in Ireland 614
Poor Law Children 615
Imports of Chinese and Japanese Teas 615
Purchase of the Estate of M. H. Franks, in North Kerry 615
Territorial Force—Excesses and Shortages 616
Travelling Allowances to Officers of the Territorial Force 617

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Cameron Corbett (Glasgow, Tradeston) 617
Mr. Eugene Wason (Clackmannan and Kinross) 623

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Cameron Corbett.*)

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 624
Mr. J. F. Mason (Windsor) 633

Amendment proposed—
"To leave out the word 'now' and at the end of the question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question.'"

Mr. Munro Ferguson (Leith Burghs) 637
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W.) 640
Sir J. Dewar (Inverness) 646
Mr. Findlay (Lanarkshire, N.E.) 648
Sir Henry Craik (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) 650
Mr. Arthur Henderson (Durham, Barnard Castle) 655
Mr. Smeaton (Stirlingshire) 660
Viscount Castlereagh (Maidstone) 662
The Secretary for Scotland (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire) 666

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Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) 672
Mr. Gulland (Dumfries Burghs) 673
Mr. Barnes (Glasgow, Blackfriars) 673
Mr. Pirie (Aberdeen, N.) 674
Mr. Ainsworth (Argyllshire) 675
Mr. Walter Long (Dublin, S.) 675
Mr. McCallum (Paisley) 677
Mr. R. Duncan (Lanarkshire, Govan) 677
Mr. Sinclair 678
Lord Willoughby de Eresby 678

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 189; Noes, 72. (Division List No. 101.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the whole House."—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

The House divided :—Ayes, 163; Noes, 85. (Division List No. 102.)

Bill committed for Monday next.

Whereupon Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at seven minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS: MONDAY, 25TH MAY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE FURTHER STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bills have been complied with :—Metropolitan Police Provisional Order; Camborne Water; Southwell District Gas.

ALSO THE STANDING ORDERS have not been complied with in respect of the Petition for the following Bill: River Wandle Protection.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 685

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [H.L.]—Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons 685

Knott End Railway Bill; Dartford Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Dundalk Urban District Council Bill—Read 3^{a}, and passed 685

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill; London County Council (General Powers) Bill. —Brought from the Commons, read 1^{a}, and referred to the Examiners ... 685

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to 685

St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments 685

London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.]; London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee adjourned this day at One o'clock; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 685

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Leith Burgh Bill [H.L.]; Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly and Burry Port Water Board Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee adjourned on Friday last at a quarter past Eleven o'clock; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 685

Holderness Water Bill (Petition for additional Provision); River Wandle Protection (Petition for Bill).—Examiner's Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Monday next 686

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Lord Saltoun be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bill in the place of the Earl of Westmeath; read, and agreed to 686

Monmouthshire County Council Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, that it is not expedient to proceed further with the Bill; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 686

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Brought from the Commons, and read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. (No. 77.)... 686

PETITIONS.

Land Values Scotland Bill.—Petition against; read, and ordered to lie on the Table 686

Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill [H.L.].—Petition in favour of; read, and ordered to lie on the Table... 686

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Education (Scotland).—Thirty-fifth Annual Report by the Accountant for Scotland 686

Ceylon.—Correspondence relating to the consumption of opium in Ceylon ... 686

Irish Land Commission.—Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act, 1903.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 687

Army.—Regulations for the Special Reserve; Regulations for the Territorial Force 687

St. Vincent.—Additional rules made for the government of the prison in St. Vincent 687

Grenada.—Prison rule abolishing the punishment of cutting the hair of female prisoners 687

Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order by the Secretary for Scotland, providing for the early closing of a certain class of shops in the burgh of Govan ... 687

Polling Districts (County of Southampton).—Order altering certain polling districts in the Basingstoke Parliamentary Division.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 687

University of London Act, 1898.—Amendment of the Statutes of the University of London, and of Statute 11 of University College, London. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be printed. (No. 75) ... 687

Port of London Bill.—Message from the Commons, That they have ordered that the Committee appointed by them to join with the Committee of this House to consider the said Bill do meet the Lords Committee in Committee Room A. on Wednesday next at Three o'clock, as proposed by their Lordships 687

NEW BILL.

Companies Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord Hamilton of Dalzell; read 1^{a}; to be printed; and to be read 2^{a} on Monday next. (No. 76.) 688

Thrift and Credit Banks Bill [H.L.].—[Second Reading.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Wenlock 688

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^{a}.—(*Lord Wenlock.*)

Lord Leith of Fyvie 693
The Marquess of Londonderry 694
The Earl of Shaftesbury 696
The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 697
Lord Belper 699

On Question agreed to.

Bill read 2^{a} accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 25th MAY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

Monument to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.—The Comptroller of the Household reported His Majesty's Answer to the Address 700

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Private Bills [Lords] (Standing Orders not previously Inquired into complied with).—Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan Electric Tramway Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time 700

Provisional Order Bills [Lords] (Standing Orders applicable thereto Complied with).—Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 700

Provisional Order Bills (no Standing Orders Applicable).—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 8) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time To-morrow 701

Provisional Order Bills (Standing Orders applicable thereto Complied with).—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 701

Private Bill Petitions [Lords] (Standing Orders not Complied with).—River Wandle Protection Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders 701

Rochdale Corporation Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to 701

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Argentine North-Eastern Railway Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time and passed, with Amendments 701

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed ... 701

Skegness Urban District Council Bill [LORDS].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time 702

King's College, London (Transfer) Bill [LORDS].—Read a second time, and committed 702

Hurly's Divorce Bill [LORDS]—Order, That in the case of Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords], Standing Orders 204 and 235 be suspended, and that the Bill be now read a second time.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

Bill accordingly read a second time, and committed 702

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 702

Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.—Read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 237.] 702

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.—Read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 238.] 702

Hurly's Divorce Bill [LORDS].—Ordered, That a message to be sent to the Lords to request that their Lordships will be pleased to communicate to this House Copies of the Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings, together with Documents deposited in the case of Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Select Committee on Divorce Bills, that they do hear Counsel and examine Witnesses for Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords], and also that they do hear Counsel and examine Witnesses against the Bill, if the parties concerned think fit to be heard by Counsel and produce Witnesses.—(*Mr. Attorney-General*) 702

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords] 703

Bristol Corporation Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 703

PETITIONS.

Character Note Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 703

Children Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 703

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 703

Dairies (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 703

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 703

Factors Act (1899) Amendment Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 703

Fatal Accidents (Damages) Bill [LORDS].—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 703

Foreign Trawlers Regulation Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 703

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 1 Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 16 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 703

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—5 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 704

Merchandise Marks Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 704

Police Superannuation (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 704

Port of London Bill.—3 Petitions against, praying to be heard; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill. 58 Petitions against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill. 1 Petition against alterations, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill ... 704

Sale of Food and Drugs Act (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition, in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 706

Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday Bill.—3 Petitions in favour to lie upon the Table ... 706

Shops Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 706

Sweated Industries Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 706

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Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Order made by the Secretary for Scotland, providing for the Early Closing of certain Shops in the Burgh of Govan; to lie upon the Table ... 706

Irish Land Commission.—Return of Advances made under the Irish Land Act; to lie upon the Table ... 706

Army (Territorial Force).—Regulations for the Territorial Force; to lie upon the Table ... 706

Army (Special Reserve).—Regulations for the Special Reserve; to lie upon the Table ... 706

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East Indian Products (Foreign Tariffs).—Address for Return ... 706

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Cost of Telephone Installations ... 707

Scale of Pay in Southampton Post Office ... 707

Issue of New Catalogue of Water Colour Drawings in the South Kensington Museum ... 707

Council Schools in Liverpool where Fees are charged ... 708

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Business of the House 775

Patents and Designs Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 239] 776

New Member Sworn.—Arthur Augustus William Harry Ponsonby, esquire, for the Stirling District of Burghs 776

Small Holdings and Allotments (Scotland) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 240] 776

Business of the House (Ways and Means).—Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings of the Committee of Ways and Means, if under consideration at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*) The House divided:—Ayes, 276; Noes, 72. (Division List No. 103.) ... 776

Ways and Means.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

INCOME-TAX.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Income-tax shall be charged for the year beginning the sixth day of April, nineteen hundred and eight, at the rate of one shilling in the pound."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer*).

Mr. Austen Chamberlain (*Worcestershire, E.*) 780
Mr. Ashton (*Bedfordshire, Luton*) 798
Mr. Samuel Roberts (*Sheffield, Ecclesall*) 802
Mr. Harold Cox (*Preston*) 807
Mr. Leverton Harris (*Tower Hamlets, Stepney*) 813
Mr. Ellis (*Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe*) 818
Mr. Snowden (*Blackburn*) 824
Mr. J. F. Mason (*Windsor*) 830
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Sir William Bull (*Hammersmith*)... 838
Mr. Brace (*Glamorganshire, S.*) 840
Mr. Gooch (*Bath*) 843
Sir Gilbert Parker (*Gravesend*) 846
Mr. Harwood (*Bolton*) 852
Mr. Bonar Law (*Camberwell, Dulwich*) 855
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs*) 863
Mr. Chaplin (*Surrey, Wimbledon*) 875
Mr. Guest (*Cardiff District*) 879
Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) 882
Mr. Hunt (*Shropshire, Ludlow*) 885

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 230; Noes, 31. (Division List No. 104.)

Resolution to be reported this day; Committee to sit again this day.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock on Monday evening, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty-three minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: TUESDAY, 26TH MAY, 1908.

The Right Honourable EDMUND ROBERTSON having been created Baron Lochee of Gowrie in the county of Perth, was (in the usual manner) introduced... 893

THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN G.C.B.—

The King's Answer to the Address of Monday, the 18th instant, reported by the Lord Steward (*Earl Beauchamp*) 893

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THE FURTHER STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: North East London Railway.

THE STANDING ORDERS applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: Post Office Sites [H.L].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Draycott Gas Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 893

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction Railway, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction Railway, and East and West Junction Railway (Amalgamation) Bill. [H.L.]; Bristol Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Upton Town Hall Bill [H.L.]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L].; Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.]; Rochester Bridge Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^{a}, and passed, and sent to the Commons. 893

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill.—Read 3ª, with the Amendments; and passed and returned to the Commons 894

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill; Doncaster Corporation Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and referred to the Examiners 894

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.]; Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments: The said Amendments considered and agreed to 894

Rochdale Corporation Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to... 894

Hurly's Divorce Bill [H.L.]—Message from the Commons for Copy of the Minutes of Evidence taken before this House, together with the proceedings and the documents deposited in the case. Ordered to be communicated, with the request that they may be returned 894

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. (No. 79.) 894

Edinburgh Corporation (Tramways, etc.), Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed 894

NEW BILL.

Assizes and Quarter Sessions Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord Alverstone; read 1ª, to be printed; and to be read 2ª to-morrow. [No. 80.] ... 894

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Africa No. 2 (1908).—Further correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo; Presented and ordered to lie upon the Table... ... 894

Importation of Plumage Prohibition Bill [H.L.].—The Evidence taken before the Select Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered out, except to Members of the Committee and such other persons as the Committee shall think fit, until further order. (No. 78.) ... 895

Agricultural Holdings Bill [H.L.].—Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (*Earl Carrington*) 895

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into the said Committee."—(*Earl Carrington*) 895

The Chairman of Committees (*The Earl of Onslow*) 895

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Verbal Amendments agreed to, and Bill reported with Amendments to the House; Standing Committee negatived.

Report of Amendments to be received to-morrow; and Bill to be printed as amended.

Small Holdings and Allotments Bill [H.L.].—Order of the day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

Earl Carrington 896

Moved, "That this House do now resolve itself into the said Committee."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

[The Earl of Onslow in the Chair.]

Verbal Amendments agreed to, and Bill reported with Amendments to the House; Standing Committee negatived.

Report of Amendments to be received to-morrow, and Bill to be printed as amended.

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Acts Amendment Bill [H.L.].—Order of the day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

Lord Lovat 897

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into the said Committee."—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

[The Earl of Onslow in the Chair.]

Amendment moved—

"Before Clause 1, page 1, line 4, after the word 'follows' to insert, 'Part I.—Amendments of the Crofters' Acts.'"—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1.

Drafting Amendments agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 8 agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 8, to insert new clause."

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 11 agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 11, to insert the following new clause: '(1) In addition to the three members of the Crofters' Commission appointed in virtue of Section 17 of the Act of 1886, it shall be lawful for His Majesty to appoint as a commissioner a person skilled in forestry; (2) The Crofters' Commission shall take such steps as they think proper for the promotion and development of forestry and of agricultural organisation and co-operation in any crofting parish or parishes.'"—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"Before Clause 12, page 5, to insert, 'Part II.—Amendments of Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897.'"—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 15 agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 15, to insert the following new clauses."

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16.

Amendment moved—

> "In page 6, line 9, to leave out the words 'In this Act' and to insert, '(1) for the purposes of this Act the expression 'new holding' means an agricultural holding the annual rent of which does not exceed thirty pounds in money. (2) For the purposes of this Act: The expression 'prescribed' means prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary for Scotland; the expression 'landlord' in relation to any land compulsorily hired by the Crofters Commission means the person for the time being entitled to receive the rent of the land from the Crofters Commission.'"—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

> "In page 6, line 19, after '1891,' to insert the following new subsection, '(3) Any Notice required by this Act to be served or given may be sent by registered post.'"—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 17.

Amendment moved—

> "To leave out Clause 17."—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18:

Amendment moved—

> "To leave out Clause 18."—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 19:

Amendment moved—

> "To leave out Clause 19."—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

> "In page 6 to insert the following,—'(1) This Act may be cited as the Crofting Parishes Act, 1908, and, so far as it relates to crofters' holdings, shall be construed with the Crofters' Acts, and may be cited with those Acts as the Crofters Holdings (Scotland) Acts, 1886 to 1908; (2) this Act shall commence on 1st January, 1909; (3) this Act shall extend to Scotland only; (4) the enactments mentioned in the Second Schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent specified in the third column of that schedule.'"—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

> "In page 7, line 1, to leave out the word 'Schedule' and to insert 'Schedules.'"

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Consequential Amendment agreed to.

Title amended, and Bill reported, with Amendments, to the House.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended.

Registration Bill [H.L.]; Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill.—House in Committee (according to Order): Bills reported without Amendment; Standing Committees negatived; and Bills to be read 3^a To-morrow ... 911

INFANTRY OFFICERS' CHARGERS.

Lord Rosmead 911
The Under-Secretary of State for War (Lord Lucas) 912

THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.

The Earl of Albermarle 912
Lord Lucas 914

Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord Herschell; (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Sections 8 and 9); read 1^a, and to be printed. (No. 84.)

House adjourned at twenty minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 26TH MAY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments ... 916

Doncaster Corporation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 916

Divorce Bills.—Ordered, That the Lord Advocate be discharged from the Select Committee on Divorce Bills.

Ordered, That Mr. Solicitor General for Ireland be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Whiteley*) 916

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill; Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed 916

Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power (re-committed) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed... 916

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to:—Knott End Railway Bill; Dartford Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Dundalk Urban District Council Bill, without Amendment; Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords].

Hurly's Divorce Bill [LORDS].—That they communicate Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings taken upon the Second Reading of Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords], together with the documents deposited in the case, as desired by this House, and they request that the same may be returned 916

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 917

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STANDING ORDERS.—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee :

1. "That, in the case of the Holderness Water Bill, Petition for Additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought not to be dispensed with."

2. "That, in the case of the Honourable Artillery Company [Lords], Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

Second Resolution agreed to.

Report to lie upon the Table 917

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 917

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 917

Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill.—Petition for Amendment; to lie upon the Table 917

Licensing Bill.—3 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 1 Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 29 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 917

Licensing Bill and Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table... 918

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—8 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 918

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Africa (No. 2, 1908).—Further Correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo; to lie upon the Table 918

Board of Education.—List of: (1) Schools in Boroughs and Urban Districts in England and Wales containing only one Public Elementary School, together with (2) Schools in Boroughs, Urban Districts, and Rural Parishes in England and Wales in which there is more than one Public Elementary School, but only one available for boys, or for girls, or for infants; to lie upon the Table 918

Imports and Exports at Prices of 1900.—Tables showing for each of the years 1900–7, the estimated value of Imports and Exports of the United Kingdom at the Prices prevailing in 1900; to lie upon the Table... ... 918

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Annual Leave of Civil Service Upper Division Clerks 918

Pollution of the River Ballybrit 919

Irish Primary Education Grant 920

Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants at Killoghert and Carrick on Shannon ... 920

Prosecution for Walking with Unlighted Cycles at Night in Ireland 920

Report of Belfast Health Commission 921

Case of Wm. Gilchriest, Letter Carrier of Granard—Application for Pension ... 921

British and German Unemployment Statistics 922

Persons in Receipt of Old-age Pensions from Friendly Societies 922

Civil Service opportunities for Boy Clerks 923

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Government Reform Bill 962
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Business of the House 965

THE KING'S VISIT TO RUSSIA.—Request for leave to move Adjournment of the House.

Mr. O'Grady 965

Leave to move refused.

Summary Jurisdiction (Ireland) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 155.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 155.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 241.]... ... 967

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A. Mr. Attorney-General (in respect of the Coroner's Inquests Bill), and Mr. Secretary Gladstone (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill); and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Solicitor-General (in respect of the Coroner's Inquests Bill), and the Lord Advocate (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committtee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Sir Randel Cremer; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill) Sir William Collins.

Reports to lie upon the Table 967

NEW BILLS.

Public Health (Sewers and Drains) Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday, 15th June, and to be printed. [Bill 243] 968

Payment of Rates Bill.—To be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 244] 968

Money Lenders Bill.—To be read a second time upon Wednesday, 3rd June, and to be printed. [Bill 245] 968

Government of Scotland.

Mr. Pirie (Aberdeen, N.) 968

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provisions for the future Government of Scotland."—*(Mr. Pirie.)*

Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 970

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 257 ; Noes, 102. (Division List No. 150.)

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Pirie, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Gulland, Mr. Robert Harcourt, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Murray Macdonald, Captain Murray, Mr. Ponsonby, Mr. Charles Price, Mr. Sutherland, Mr. Eugene Wason, and Mr. Wilkie.

Government of Scotland Bill.—"To amend the provisions for the future Government of Scotland," presented accordingly, and read the first time ; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 246.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (REPORTS OF MONEY COMMITTEES).

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 975

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Proceedings on the Reports of the Committee of Ways and Means and Committees authorising the expenditure of Public Money other than Committee of Supply, may be entered upon at any hour after Eleven o'clock, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—*(Mr. Asquith.)*

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 978

Amendment proposed—

"In line 4, after the word 'may' to insert the words 'at least two days notice having previously been publicly given.'"—*(Sir F. Banbury.)*

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. A. J. Balfour 981
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 983

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 983
Lord Willoughby de Eresby (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) 984
Mr. Crooks (Woolwich) 985
Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 986
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) 986
Mr. Asquith 986
Captain Craig (Down, E.) 989
Mr. Byles (Salford, N.) 991

Main Question put, and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS [7TH MAY] Report.

Resolutions reported:

TEA.

1. "That the Customs duty now charged on tea shall continue to be charged until the first day of July, nineteen hundred and nine, that is to say—Tea, the pound, fivepence.

SUGAR.

2. "That the Customs duties imposed and the drawbacks allowed under section two of The Finance Act, 1901 (being duties and drawbacks in respect of sugar, molasses, glucose, and saccharin), and the excise duties imposed and the drawbacks allowed on glucose and saccharin under section five of the same Act, and the allowance in respect of molasses used for food for stock under subsection two of section one of The Revenue Act, 1903, be reduced in each case by fifty-six per cent., or as near thereto as the Treasury may determine, the reduction to take effect on and after the eighteenth day of May, nineteen hundred and eight. Provided that, as respects the duty charged on manufactured or prepared goods under section seven of The Finance Act, 1901, and the drawback allowed on any such goods in respect of which it is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioners of Customs that the duty was paid on the sugar, molasses, glucose, or saccharin used in the manufacture or preparation at the rates now charged, the reduction shall not take effect until the first day of July, nineteen hundred and eight."

IRISH TOBACCO.

3. "That there shall be charged on and after the first day of January, nineteen hundred and nine, on Tobacco grown in Ireland, the following excise duties, namely:—

		s.	d.
Upon tobacco, manufactured, namely—			
Cavendish or negro head manufactured in bond	the lb.	3	10
Upon tobacco, unmanufactured, namely—			
Tobacco containing 10lbs. or more of moisture in every 100lbs. weight thereof	the lb.	2	10
Tobacco containing less than 10lbs. of moisture in every 100lbs. weight thereof	the lb.	3	2

and there shall be charged, on and after the same date, on a licence to be taken out annually by every person growing, cultivating, or curing tobacco in Ireland, an excise duty of five shillings."

AMENDMENT OF LAW.

4. "That it is expedient to amend the law relating to the National Debt, Customs, and Inland Revenue."

First Resolution agreed to.

Second Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Mr. McArthur (*Liverpool, Kirkdale*) 992
Mr. Stuart Wortley (*Sheffield, Hallam*) 997
Mr. Asquith 998

Mr. Bonar Law (Camberwell, Dulwich) 998
Mr. Austen Taylor (Liverpool, East Toxteth) 1001
Mr. Samuel Roberts (Sheffield, Ecclesall) 1002
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs) 1003
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1006
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W.) 1011
Sir F. Banbury 1012
Mr. Richardson (Nottingham, S.) 1014
Mr. R. Duncan (Lanarkshire, Govan) 1015
Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth) 1015

Question put and agreed to.

Third Resolution read a second time,

Mr. Gwynn (Galway) 1016
Mr. Kettle (Tyrone, E.) 1020

Amendment proposed—

"In line 5, to leave out '3s. 10d.' and insert '2s. 10d.'"—(*Mr. Gwynn.*)

Question proposed, "That '3s. 10d.' stand part of the said Resolution."

Mr. Lloyd-George 1021
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1023
Mr. Boland (Kerry, S.) 1027
Mr. Barrie (Londonderry, N.) 1028
Mr. Lloyd-George 1029

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution agreed to.

Fourth Resolution agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS [25TH MAY] REPORT.

Resolution reported :

INCOME-TAX.

"That Income-Tax shall be charged for the year beginning the sixth day of April, nineteen hundred and eight, at the rate of one shilling in the pound."

Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by the Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Hobhouse.

FINANCE BILL.

"To grant certain Duties of Customs and Inland Revenue, to alter other Duties, and to amend the Law relating to Customs and Inland Revenue and the National Debt, and to make other provisions for the financial arrangements of the year," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 247.] 1029

LOCAL TAXATION, NATIONAL DEBT, AND ASSESSORS [PAYMENTS].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "1. That it is expedient that the power to levy the duties on certain local taxation licences in England and Wales should be transferred to county councils, and that Section 17 of the Finance Act, 1907, should not apply to such duties, and that an annual sum be paid out of the Consolidated Fund to the local taxation account to be distributed amongst the county councils in England and Wales in connection with the transfer.—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Sir A. Acland-Hood (Somersetshire, Wellington) 1030
Mr. Lloyd George 1030
Mr. Hicks Beach (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) 1030
Lord R. Cecil 1031
Mr. Lloyd-George 1031
Mr. Laurence Hardy (Kent, Ashford) 1032
Mr. Austen Chamberlain 1032
Mr. Courthope (Sussex, Rye) 1035
Mr. Carlile (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) 1036

Question put, and agreed to.

2. Resolved, That it is expedient that the surplus of income over expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1908, to the extent of £600,000, instead of being applied as provided by The Sinking Fund Act, 1875, be applied to defray expenses incurred by the Commissioners of Works in connection with public offices.

3. Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of increased allowances to assessors of taxes.—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.), in the Chair.]

Motion made, and Question proposed,—"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of any Expenses so far as not otherwise provided for, incurred by the Commissioners of Works under any Act of the present session, to provide for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office, and for certain other public purposes.—(*Mr. Harcourt.*)

Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth) 1037
The First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Harcourt, Lancashire, Rossendale) 1038
Lord Balcarres (Lancashire, Chorley) 1038
Mr. Courthope 1039
Mr. Harcourt 1039

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) [CONSOLIDATED FUND].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,—" That it is expedient to authorise the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the Fund of the Suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland in pursuance of any Act of the present session to provide further facilities for the erection of Houses for the Working Classes in cities and towns in Ireland.—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Sir A. Acland-Hood 1040
Mr. Lloyd-George 1040

Motion made, and Question, " That this House do now adjourn."—*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at nineteen minutes before Nine o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS: WEDNESDAY, 27TH MAY, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Holderness Water Bill.—(Petition for additional Provision).—The Order of Monday last referring the Examiners certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders to the Standing Orders Committee, discharged 1041

North Eastern Railway Bill; Blaydon and Ryton Water (Transfer) Bill.—The King's consent signified; and Bills reported, with Amendments ... 1041

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.]—Reported, with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House 1041

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with an Amendment, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House 1041

Local Government (Ireland) Provisonal Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, without Amendment, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House 1041

Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Great Northern, Piccadilly and Brompton Railway Bill [H.L.]; Wath upon-Dearne Urban District Council Gas Bill [H.L.], now Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments 1041

Cheshire Lines Committee Bill.—Reported without Amendments... ... 1041

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª 1041

Southwell District Gas Bill; Camborne Water Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed 1041

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Read 3ª, with Amendments; and passed, and returned to the Commons... 1041

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Committed ... 1041

Leicester Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1042

Loch Leven Water Power Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order) and passed 1042

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RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Board of Education.—Schools in boroughs and urban districts in England and Wales containing only one public elementary school; schools in boroughs, urban districts, and rural parishes in England and Wales, in which there is more than one public elementary school, but only one available either for boys, or for girls, or for infants 1042

Imports and Exports.—Tables showing the estimated value of the imports and exports of the United Kingdom 1042

Historical Manuscripts (Royal Commission).—Calendar of the manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde, K.P. 1042

Natal.—Correspondence relating to native affairs.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1042

Motor Car Acts, 1896 and 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor cars on part of a certain highway situate within the parish of Alfriston.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor cars on the highway known as Barge Walk.

Regulation as to the registration of motor cars made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896, and Section 7 of Act of 1903; Merthyr Tydfil (County Borough).—For assigning index mark to county borough 1042

Local Government Act 1888.—Thirteen orders under Section 57 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board, of county and county borough councils.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie upon the Table 1043

THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

Lord Newton 1044
The Under-Secretary of State for War (*Lord Lucas*) 1045
Lord Newton 1047
Lord Heneage 1050
The Earl of Erroll... 1050
The Earl of Dartmouth 1050
Lord Lucas 1051

EMPLOYMENT OF OLD SOLDIERS.

The Earl of Carlisle 1052
Lord Denman 1053
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1054

RIFLE RANGE RENTS.

Lord Heneage 1054
Lord Lucas... 1056

Assizes and Quarter Sessions Bill [SECOND READING].—Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Alverstone 1056

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a."—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

The Lord Chancellor (*Lord Loreburn*) 1058
Lord Belper 1058

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday, the 16th day of June next.

TERRITORIAL ARMY RECRUITING.

The Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe ... 1059
Lord Lucas ... 1060

Agricultural Holdings Bill [H.L.]; Small Holdings and Allotments Bill [H.L.].—Amendments reported (according to order); and Bills to be read 3ª on Monday next ... 1061

Registration Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons ... 1061

Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill.—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed ... 1061

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: WEDNESDAY, 27TH MAY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Llanelly Gas Bill [LORDS].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time ... 1061

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—Presented by Mr. Sinclair; read the first time; and ordered (under Section 9 of the Act) to be read a second time upon Thursday, 4th June, and to be printed. [Bill 248] ... 1061

Oyster and Mussel Fishery (Bay of Firth) Order Confirmation Bill.—Presented by Mr. Sinclair; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 249] ... 1062

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to;—Edinburgh Corporation (Tramways, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment.

Amendments to:—Argentine North-Eastern Railway Bill [Lords]; Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords].

Also a Bill, intituled, Bristol Tramways Bill [Lords].

Also a Bill, intituled, Upton Town Hall Bill [Lords].

Also a Bill, intituled, South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords].

Also a Bill, intituled, Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords].

And also, a Bill, intituled, Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords]. ... 1062

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Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords]; Bristol Tramways Bill [Lords]; Upton Town Hall Bill [Lords]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords]; Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords]; Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1063

PETITIONS.

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1063

Dairies (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1063

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table ... 1063

Licensing Bill.—2 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 5 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 34 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1063

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—8 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1064

Merchandise Marks (No. 2) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1064

Police Superannuation (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1064

Port of London Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table 1064

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Motor Car Acts.—Regulations made by the Local Government Board under the Motor Car Acts; to lie upon the Table 1064

Local Government Act, 1888.—Orders made by the various County and County Borough Councils in England and Wales under Section 57 of the Act; to lie upon the Table 1064

Natal.—Further Correspondence relating to Native Affairs; to lie upon the Table 1064

Admiralty Casualties, etc.—Return ordered 1065

East India (Income and Expenditure).—Address for "Return" of the Net Income and Expenditure of British India 1065

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Motor Cab Regulations 1065
Pay of Senior Postmen and Lobby Officers 1066
Irish Land Purchase Finance 1067
Foreign Trawlers 1067
Appointments for Boy Clerks 1067
Government Printing Contracts 1068
Returns of Cattle Sales 1071
Supply of Hides 1083
Prosecutions under the Truck Act in Ulster 1083
Upkeep of Irish Main Roads 1084

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Purchase of Estate of Mr. J. C. Hartnett of Listowell 1084
Burning of Shed of Mr. S. Comer at Williamstown 1084
Wexford County Council and Expenditure on Marine Works 1085
Ballymoney (Antrim) Girls School 1086
Belfast Public Abattoir 1086
Refusal of Gun Carriage for Funeral of Daniel Doran 1087

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Chatham Harbour 1087
The Territorial Artillery 1088
War Office Contracts 1088
The New Hebrides—Liquor Traffic 1089
Canada and the West Indies—Tariff Reduction Negotiations 1090
Dinizulu 1091
Northern Nigeria 1093
Transvaal Committee on Unemployment 1094
Portuguese Natives in the Transvaal Mines 1094
British Indians in the Transvaal 1094
Franco-Canadian Treaty of Commerce 1095
Chinese Mortality in the Transvaal Mines 1095
Trinidad Legislative Council 1096
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Workmen's Compensation and Insurance 1097
Receiving Homes for Aliens 1097
Bearing Reins 1098
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Cycles as Railway Luggage... 1101
Foreshore Dispute 1101
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Railway Men's Right of Combination 1104
Milk Bill 1104
Motor Cars and Road Maintenance 1105
Public Health Act Orders 1105
Vaccination 1106
National Gallery Extension... 1106
Deptford Wharf 1107
Imports of Hides 1107
Cycles on the Cornish Express 1108
Irish Local Government Board—Additional Auditor 1108

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Irish Local Government Board—Remuneration of Mr. A. D. Price 1109
Irish Local Government Board—Assistant Clerk in Charge of Accounts ... 1110
Irish National Education Board Secretaries 1110
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Rathkeale School Teacher 1112
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The Lord Chancellor's Department 1116
Excise Staff and Old-Age Pensions 1117
Excise and Customs Staff 1117
Irish Land Purchase Finance 1118
The King's Visit to Russia 1118
Defence of the Country 1120

SELECTON (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection that they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A. (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill): Colonel Seely; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill): Sir John Dewar.
Report to lie upon the Table. 1120

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.—Fourth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1121

NEW BILL.

Prevention of Crime.

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (*Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.*) 1121

Motion made, and Question, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for that purpose to provide for the reformation of young offenders and the prolonged detention of habitual criminals; and for other purposes incidental thereto"—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Gladstone, Mr. Attorney-General, and Mr. Herbert Samuel.

Prevention of Crime Bill.—"To make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for that purpose to provide for the reformation of young offenders and the prolonged detention of habitual criminals; and for other purposes incidental thereto," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time Tomorrow, and to be printed. [Bill 242.]

OLD-AGE PENSIONS (EXPENSES).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs) 1126

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to provide for Old-age Pensions, and to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any Expenses incurred for that purpose and connected therewith."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Mr. Chaplin (Surrey, Wimbledon) 1127
Mr. Lloyd-George 1129
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1130

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'not exceeding in amount £1,200,000.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. Stanley Wilson (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) 1132
Mr. A. J. Balfour (City of London) 1133
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.) 1136
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (Worcestershire, E.) 1138
Mr. Lloyd-George 1140
Sir F. Banbury 1141

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. Fell (Great Yarmouth) 1142
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) 1143
Mr. Laurence Hardy (Kent, Ashford) 1144
Mr. Starkey (Nottinghamshire, Newark) 1144

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That it is expedient to provide for old-age pensions, and to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any expenses incurred for that purpose and connected therewith."

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That for the purposes of any Act of the present session to make further provision with respect to University Education in Ireland, it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament—(*a*) of the remuneration of the secretary to the Commissioners, and of any persons appointed or employed by them, and of any expenses incurred by the Commissioners in the execution of such Act; and (*b*) of grants for the purpose of either of the new Universities, or of the constituent colleges of the new University at Dublin, or of the governing bodies thereof."—(*Mr. Birrell.*)

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1145

Amendment proposed—

"In line 7, after the word 'Act,' to insert the words 'such sum not to exceed £2,000 per annum.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

The Chief Secretary for Ireland (*Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.*) ... 1147
Mr. Walter Long (*Dublin, S.*) ... 1148
Sir F. Banbury ... 1151
Mr. Charles Craig (*Antrim, S.*) ... 1152

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 57; Noes, 276. (Division List No. 106.)

Sir F. Banbury ... 1155

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'such grants not to exceed £80,000 per annum.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. Charles Craig ... 1157
Sir F. Banbury ... 1158
Mr. Markham (*Nottinghamshire, Mansfield*) ... 1158
Mr. Birrell ... 1159
Mr. Gordon (*Londonderry, S.*) ... 1160
Dr. Hazel (*West Bromwich*) ... 1159
Mr. Flynn (*Cork, N.*) ... 1161
Mr. Harold Cox (*Preston*) ... 1161
Mr. William Rutherford (*Liverpool, West Derby*) ... 1161
Sir F. Banbury ... 1162

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 48; Noes, 277. (Division List No. 107.)

Main Question again proposed.

Mr. BIRRELL rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 270; Noes, 59. (Division List No. 108.)

Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That for the purposes of any Act of the present session to make further provision with respect to University Education in Ireland, it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament—(*a*) of the remuneration of the secretary to the Commissioners, and of any persons appointed or employed by them, and of any expenses incurred by the Commissioners in the execution of such Act: and (*b*) of grants for the purposes of either of the new Universities, or of the constituent colleges of the new University at Dublin, or of the governing bodies thereof."

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

SHETLAND MAIL SERVICE.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Contract dated 6th day of December, 1907, between the Postmaster-General and the North of Scotland and Orkney and Shetland Steam Navigation Company for the conveyance of Mails between Aberdeen and the Shetland Islands (printed in Parliamentary Paper, No. 41, of Session 1908), be approved."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Mr. Mooney (*Newry*) ... 1170
Mr. William Rutherford ... 1171
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.*) ... 1171
Mr. Ashley (*Lancashire, Blackpool*) ... 1171
The Postmaster-General (*Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) ... 1172

Question put, and agreed to.

ALDERNEY MAIL SERVICE.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Contract, dated the 28th day of September, 1907, between the Postmaster-General and the Alderney Steam Packet Company, Limited, for the conveyance of Mails between Alderney and Guernsey, Alderney and Cherbourg, and other places at which the Company's Mail-ships call (printed in Parliamentary Paper, No. 23, of Session 1908), be approved."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Mr. Mooney 1172
Mr. William Rutherford 1172
Mr. Hobhouse 1173
Mr. John Ward (*Stoke-on-Trent*) 1174
Sir F. Banbury 1175

Question put, and agreed to.

WEST INDIAN INTER-COLONIAL MAIL SERVICE.—Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Contract, dated the 29th day of August, 1907, between the Crown Agents for the Colonies and the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company for the conveyance of Mails between certain Colonies in the West Indies for a period of ten years (printed in Parliamentary Paper, No. 24, of Session 1908), be approved."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Mr. William Rutherford 1176
Mr. J. M. Robertson (*Northumberland, Tyneside*) 1177
Mr. Ashley 1178
Sir F. Banbury 1178
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (*Lanarkshire, N. W.*) 1179
Mr. Markham 1180
Mr. Hobhouse 1180
The Solicitor-General (*Sir S. Evans, Glamorganshire, Mid.*) 1184
Mr. Stuart Wortley (*Sheffield, Hallam*) 1184

Question put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES] REPORT—Resolution reported:—"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of any Expenses, so far as not otherwise provided for, incurred by the Commissioners of Works under any Act of the present session, to provide for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office, and for certain other public purposes."

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Sir F. Banbury 1185
Lord Balcarres (*Lancashire, Chorley*) 1186
Mr. J. A. Pease (*Essex, Saffron Walden*) 1186
Mr. Ashley 1186
Mr. William Rutherford 1186

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the Clock, Further Proceeding was postponed without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4.

HOUSING OF WORKPEOPLE.

Mr. Maddison (*Burnley*) 1188
Mr. John Ward (*Stoke-on-Trent*) 1192

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House considers that immediate steps should be taken to secure the provision of proper sanitary housing accommodation for workpeople employed upon works of construction and in other occupations of a temporary character."—(*Mr. Maddison.*)

Mr. Albert Stanley (Staffordshire, N.W.) 1201
Mr. Partington (Derbyshire, High Peak) 1203
Mr. Maclean (Bath) 1204
Mr. Nicholls (Northamptonshire, N.) 1206
Mr. W. E. Harvey (Derbyshire, N.E.) 1208
Sir John Kennaway (Devonshire, Honiton) 1209
Mr. Vivian (Birkenhead) 1210
The President of the Local Government Board (Mr. John Burns, Battersea) 1212

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That this House considers that immediate steps should be taken to secure the provision of proper sanitary housing accommodation for workpeople employed upon works of construction and in other occupations of a temporary character."—(*Mr. Maddison.*)

DEPOPULATION (ROXBURGHSHIRE).

Sir J. Jardine (Roxburghshire) 1221
Mr. Dundas White (Dumbartonshire) 1223

It being Eleven o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES] REPORT.—Postponed proceeding on Question, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of any expenses, so far as not otherwise provided for, incurred by the Commissioners of Works under any Act of the present session, to provide for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office, and for certain other public purposes,'" resumed.

Question again proposed.

Motion made, and Question, "That the debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Joseph Pease*,)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow 1223

Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Amendment Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committe 1224

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) [CONSOLIDATED FUND].—Resolution reported :—"That it is expedient to authoriese the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the Fund of Suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland in pursuance of any Act of the present session to provide further facilities for the erection of houses for the working classes in cities and towns in Ireland."

Resolution agreed to 1224

LOCAL TAXATION, NATIONAL DEBT, AND ASSESSORS [PAYMENTS].—Resolutions reported :—

"That it is expedient that the power to levy the duties on certain local taxation licences in England and Wales should be transferred to county councils, and that section seventeen of the Finance Act, 1907, should not apply to such duties, and that an annual sum be paid out of the Consolidated Fund to the local taxation account to be distributed amongst the county councils in England and Wales in connection with the transfer."

"That it is expedient that the surplus of income over expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1908, to the extent of £600,000, instead of being applied as provided by the Sinking Fund Act, 1875, be applied to defray expenses incurred by the Commissioners of Works in connection with public offices."

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of increased allowances to assessors of taxes."

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an instruction to the Committee on the Finance Bill that they have power to make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution 1224

CHILDREN [EXPENSES].—Resolution reported :—"That it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of any expenses that may be incurred and of any contributions that may be made under the provisions of any Act of the present session to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the Protection of Children and Young Persons."

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. William Rutherford 1225
Mr. Rawlinson 1226
Sir F. Banbury 1227

Amendment proposed—

"In line 2, to leave out the words 'and of any contributions that may be made.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said Resolution."

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland) 1227

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution agreed to.

Adjourned at twenty-one minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, THURSDAY, 28TH MAY, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Skegness Urban District Council Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time and passed, with Amendments. 1229

Marriages Provisional Order Bill.—Presented by Mr. Herbert Samuel; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 251] 1229

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders Confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time to-morrow 1229

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill.—Reported, without Amendment, [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. Bill to be read the third time to-morrow ... ...

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Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table. ... 1229

Bill to be read the third time to-morrow 1229

London County Council (Money) Bill; Great Western Railway Bill [Lords]; Swansea Valley Gas Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed... 1229

Private Bills (Group G.)—Mr. Arthur Stanley reported from the Committee on Group G. of Private Bills; That for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at Eleven of the Clock

Report to lie upon the Table 1229

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1230

Coal Mines (Eight Hours) (No. 2) Bill.—6 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1230

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table 1230

Licensing Bill.—2 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 8 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 55 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1230

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—Petition against to lie upon the Table. 6 Petitions in favour to lie upon the Table 1230

Public Health Officers Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon Table 1230

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Historical Manuscripts (Royal Commission).—Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde, K.P.; to lie upon the Table 1231

Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks.—Twenty-fifth Report of the Comptroller-General of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 156] 1231

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

School of Military Engineering, Chatham—Case of J. W. Davidson 1231

Yeomanry and Volunteer Officers 1232

Bexhill Postal Wage Scale 1232

Franco-Canadian Treaties 1233

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Colonel Gasgoine's Kilfinane Estate 1234

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Temperance Reform in Scotland ... 1288
Scottish Local Veto Bill ... 1289
Licensing Bill ... 1289
Creation of Peerages ... 1289
Royal Visit to Russia ... 1290
Business of the House ... 1291

Coroners' Inquests Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Title amended] from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 157.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 157.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee) to be taken into consideration upon Thursday, 11th June, and to be printed. [Bill 250] ... 1293

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee C: Mr. Campbell and Mr. Moore; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Mr. Lonsdale and Mr. Staveley-Hill.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

Whale Fisheries (Ireland) Bill.—Presented by Mr. T. W. Russell; to be read a second time upon Monday, 15th June, and to be printed. [Bill 252] 1293

Navigation Works (Ireland) Bill.—Presented by Mr. T. W. Russell; to be read a second time upon Monday, 15th June, and to be printed. [Bill 253] 1294

SUPPLY [8TH ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

CLASS V.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £792,376, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for sundry Colonial Services, including certain Grants-in-Aid."

Mr. Lyttelton (St. George's, Hanover Square) ... 1294
Mr. Ashley (Lancashire, Blackpool) ... 1301
Mr. Cathcart Wason (Orkney and Shetland) ... 1308
Sir Gilbert Parker (Gravesend) ... 1312
Sir Charles Dilke (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) ... 1319
Mr. Evelyn Cecil (Aston Manor) ... 1322
The Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (Colonel Seely, Liverpool, Abercromby) ... 1328
Earl Winterton (Sussex, Horsham) ... 1335
Mr. Molteno (Dumfriesshire) ... 1339
Sir F. Cawley (Lancashire, Prestwich) ... 1340
Mr. H. J. Tennant (Berwickshire) ... 1340
Mr. Rees (Montgomery Boroughs) ... 1341

Mr. Bennett (Oxfordshire, Woodstock) ... 1345
Mr. Wedgwood (Newcastle-under-Lyme) ... 1348
Mr. Summerbell (Sunderland) ... 1352
Colonel Seely ... 1352
Mr. Bowles (Lambeth, Norwood) ... 1354
Sir F. Banbury (City of London) ... 1355

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the Clock, and there being Private business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order No. 8, further Proceeding was postponed without Question put.

Tyne Improvement Bill [BY ORDER].—Consideration, as amended, deferred till Thursday, 18th June, at a quarter-past Eight of the Clock ... 1357

Widnes Corporation Bill [BY ORDER].—Third Reading deferred till Friday, 12th June ... 1357

SUPPLY (CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.)

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That a sum, not exceeding £792,376, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for sundry Colonial Services, including certain Grants-in Aid," resumed.

Question again proposed.

Sir F. Banbury ... 1357
Colonel Seely ... 1357
Lord Balcarres ... 1359
Mr. John Ward (Stoke-on-Trent) ... 1361
Mr. Hart-Davies (Hackney, N.) ... 1363

Question put, and agreed to.

CLASS III.

2. £127,889, to complete the sum for Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain.

3. £400,345, to complete the sum for Prisons, England and the Colonies.

Mr. Pickersgill (Bethnal Green, S.W.) ... 1364
Mr. Tomkinson (Cheshire, Crewe) ... 1366
Mr. John Ward ... 1367
The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland) ... 1368
Mr. Byles (Salford, N.) ... 1370
Mr. Wardle (Stockport) ... 1372
Mr. Herbert Samuel ... 1373

Vote agreed to.

4. £28,781, to complete the sum for Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY [2ND APRIL] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:—

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

CLASS I.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £473,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Customs, Inland Revenue, Post Office, and Post Office Telegraph Buildings in Great Britain, and certain Post Offices abroad, including Furniture, Fuel, and sundry Miscellaneous Services."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £342,900, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, in respect of sundry Public Buildings in Great Britain, not provided for on other Votes."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £52,400 (including a Supplementary sum of £13,000), be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for Expenditure in respect of Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, and for the maintenance of certain Cemeteries abroad."

Resolutions agreed to 1373

SUPPLY [14TH MAY] REPORT.

Resolutions reported :—

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1908–9.

CLASS II.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £5, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for Stationery, Printing, &c., including Reports of Parliamentary Debates."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £405,212, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for Stationery, Printing, Paper, Binding, and Printed Books for the Public Service; for the Salaries and Expenses of the Stationery Office; and for sundry Miscellaneous Services, including Reports of Parliamentary Debates."

CLASS I.

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £355,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for Rates and Contributions in lieu of Rates, &c., in respect of Government Property, and for Rates on Houses occupied by Representatives of Foreign Powers, and for the Salaries and Expenses of the rating of Government Property Department, and for a Contribution towards the Expenses of the London Fire Brigade."

CLASS II.

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £35, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Mint, including the Expenses of Coinage."

5. "That a sum, not exceeding £8,420, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the National Debt Office."

CLASS VI.

6. "That a sum, not exceeding £338, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for certain Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances."

CLASS II.

7. "That a sum, not exceeding £23,178, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Civil Service Commission."

Resolutions agreed to 1374

SUPPLY [21ST MAY] REPORT.

Resolution reported :—

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9

CLASS II.

"That a sum, not exceeding £120,788, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Department of Agriculture and other Industries and Technical Instruction for Ireland, and of the services administered by that Department, including sundry Grants-in-Aid."

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

Mr. Joyce (Limerick) 1375
Mr. Dillon (Mayo, E.) 1378
Mr. Tomkinson 1382
Mr. Mooney (Newry) 1382
The Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture for Ireland (Mr. T. W. Russell, Tyrone, S.) 1385
Mr. Gwynn (Galway) 1388

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS.—Resolution reported—"That it is expedient to provide old-age pensions and to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any Expenses incurred for that purpose and connected therewith."

Mr. William Rutherford (Liverpool, West Derby) 1389

Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Burns, and Mr. Attorney-General.

Old-Age Pensions Bill.—"To provide for Old-age Pensions," presented accordingly, and read the first time ; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 254] 1395

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES].—Order read, for resuming Adjourned debate on Question [27th May], "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of any Expenses, so far as not otherwise provided for, incurred by the Commissioners of Works under any Act of the present session, to provide for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office, and for certain other public purposes.' "—(*Mr. Harcourt.*)

Question again proposed.

Page
Mr. William Rutherford 1395
Question put, and agreed to.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty minutes before Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: FRIDAY, 29TH MAY, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill [LORDS].—Amendments considered, and agreed to 1397

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Read the third time, and passed 1397

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill.—Presented by Mr. Masterman. Read the first time. To be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 255.] 1397

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—5 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1397

Education (Scotland) Bill.—Petition for alteration; to lie upon the Table... 1397

Elementary Education (England and Wales) Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1397

Licensing Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table. 8 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 17 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1397

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1398

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Agricultural Statistics (Ireland), 1907–8 (Agricultural Labourers).—Report and Tables; to lie upon the Table 1398

National Portrait Gallery.—Fifty-first Annual Report of the Trustees; to lie upon the Table 1398

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Horsham Postmen and Sunday Telephone Duties 1398
Regulation of Friendly Societies 1398
Sunday Delivery of Telegrams at Chester... 1399
Irish Railway Disputes 1400
British and German Armoured Cruisers 1400
Port of London Bill and London and India Docks Debenture Stock 1400
Fees for Adjustment of Weights and Measures 1401
Income of Scottish Secondary Schools 1401

Meat Prices at Smithfield and Deptford 1402
Rebate on Sugar Duty 1403
Irish Evicted Tenants—Reinstatement of Jeremiah Sullivan 1404
Boycotting in Ireland 1404
Volunteer Long Service Decoration 1405

Public Rights of Way Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Winfrey (Norfolk, S.W.) 1405
Mr. Higham (Yorkshire, W.R., Sowerby) 1407

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Winfrey.*)

Sir F. Banbury (City of London) 1408
Captain Craig (Down, E.) 1413

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Mr. Herbert (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe) 1416
Mr. McArthur (Liverpool, Kirkdale) 1418
Mr. Harold Cox (Preston) 1420
Mr. Rawlinson (Cambridge University) 1421
Mr. Dundas White (Dumbartonshire) 1423
Mr. Lambton (Durham, S.E.) 1424
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (Lanarkshire, N.W.) 1425
Mr. Byles (Salford, N.) 1426
Mr. Younger (Ayr Burghs) 1428
Viscount Castlereagh (Maidstone) 1430
Lord R. Cecil (Marylebone, E.) 1431
The Attorney-General (Sir W. Robson, South Shields) 1433
Mr. Alexander Cross (Glasgow, Camlachie) 1435
Mr. Meysey-Thompson (Staffordshire, Handsworth) 1436

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 160 ; Noes, 13. (Division List No. 109.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Coal Mines (Checkweighers) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Mr. Caldwell) 1437
Mr. Brace (Glamorganshire, S.) 1438

Order discharged, and Bill withdrawn.

Access to Mountains (Scotland) Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker 1439

Order discharged, and Bill withdrawn.

Commons Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Mr. Trevelyan (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland) 1439

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Captain Craig (Down, E.) 1442

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Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Captain Craig.*)

Lord R. Cecil (*Marylebone, E.*) ... 1445
Mr. Lupton (*Lincolnshire, Sleaford*) ... 1446
Mr. Lane-Fox (*Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash*) ... 1446
Mr. Whitley (*Halifax*) ... 1447
Sir F. Banbury ... 1448
Sir J. Jardine (*Roxburghshire*) ... 1450
Mr. Fell (*Great Yarmouth*) ... 1450
Colonel Lockwood (*Essex, Epping*) ... 1451
Mr. Hunt (*Shropshire, Ludlow*) ... 1452

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 48; Noes, 161. (Division List No. 110.)

Original Question again proposed.

Sir A. Acland-Hood (*Somersetshire, Wellington*) ... 1453
Sir S. Evans ... 1456
Lord R. Cecil ... 1457

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

Sir Henry Craik (*Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities*) ... 1461
Mr. C. H. Corbett (*Sussex, East Grinstead*) ... 1463
Viscount Helmsley (*Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk*) ... 1465
The Treasurer of the Household (*Sir Edward Strachey, Somersetshire, S.*) 1467
Mr. Stuart Wortley (*Sheffield, Hallam*) ... 1468
Mr. Rawlinson (*Cambridge University*) ... 1470
Mr. Ashley (*Lancashire, Blackpool*) ... 1470
Colonel Lockwood ... 1471

And, it being Five of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER proceeded to interrupt the Business.

Whereupon Mr. TREVELYAN rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put"; but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate to be resumed on Monday next.

Municipal Elections Bill.—Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee ... 1471

Port of London Bill.—Ordered, "That the Petition of the Glasgow Shipowners' Association against the Port of London Bill, presented on 27th May, be referred to the Joint Committee on the Bill."—(*Mr. Younger*) ... 1471

POLICE FORCES WEEKLY REST-DAY.

Ordered, "That Mr. Herbert Lewis be discharged from the Select Committee on Police Forces Weekly Rest-day."

Ordered, "That Mr. Ellis, Mr. Remnant, Mr. Wiles, and Mr. Guy Wilson be added to the Committee."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease*) ... 1471

Criccieth Water and Improvement Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Selection A); Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed ... 1472

Selection (Standing Committees).—Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A: Mr. Joyce, Mr. Smyth, and Mr. Waldron (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill); Mr. Harrington, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Nannetti, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, Mr. William Redmond, and Mr. Patrick O'Brien; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Sheehy, Mr. Kavanagh, Mr. Hazleton, Mr. James O'Connor, Mr. Charles MacVeigh, Mr. Mooney, Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, Mr. Haviland-Burke, and Mr. O'Malley.

Report to lie upon the Table 1472

Railway Bills (**Group 3**).—Sir Joseph Compton Rickett reported from the Committee on Group 3 of Railway Bills: That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Wednesday, 24th June, at Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table 1472

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at five minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS, MONDAY, 1st JUNE, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, That the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Garw and Ogmore Gas; London County Council (General Powers); Wolverhampton Corporation; Doncaster Corporation; Manchester Corporation.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table 1473

Standing Orders Committee.—Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for the River Wandle Protection Bill ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to introduce the Bill. Read, and agreed to 1473

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.].—Presented (pursuant to leave given this day), and read 1ª 1473

Keighley Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1473

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments... 1473

Lincoln Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1473

Leeds Corporation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments 1473

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.]—Leave given to the Select Committee to adjourn over this day, and not to sit To-morrow till Three o'clock 1473

Llanelly and Burry Port Water Board Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, That it is not expedient to proceed further with the Bill ... 1473

Barry Railway Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons 1474

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Brought from the Commons 147

Skegness Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments; The said Amendments considered, and agreed to 1474

Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments 1474

St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered, and agreed to 1474

Paisley District Tramways Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Presented by the Lord Denman (for the Lord Herschell) (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1809, Sections 8 and 9); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 86) 1474

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª (according to order) 1474

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill (No. 88); Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill (No. 89); Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill (No. 90).—Read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners 1474

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills.—Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92 and 93 be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, also the time for depositing Documents relating to any Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Whitsuntide, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess 1474

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (Cornwall, etc.) Bill [H.L.].—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ª.

Viscount Halifax 1474

Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee to which the Bill may be referred to strike out the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council Order."—(*Viscount Halifax.*)

The Secretary of State for the Colonies (*The Earl of Crewe*) 1480
The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury 1484
Lord Fitzmaurice 1484
The Marquess of Londonderry 1485
Lord Stanley of Alderley 1486
The Marquess of Lansdowne 1487

Moved, "That the debate be adjourned."—(*Lord Heneage*).

On Question,

Debate adjourned accordingly.

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Colonies: Annual.

No. 557. East Africa Protectorate (Report for 1906–1907).
No. 558. Uganda (Report for 1906–1907). 1488

East Africa Protectorate.—Correspondence relating to the tenure of land in the East Africa Protectorate 1488

National Portrait Gallery.—Fifty-first Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery 1488

Fisheries (Scotland).—Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland 1488

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Annual Report of proceedings under the Tithe Acts, 1836 to 1891, the Copyhold Act, 1894, the Inclosure Acts, 1845 to 1899, the Agricultural Holdings Acts, 1883 to 1900, the Drainage and Improvement of Land Acts, the Universities and College Estates Acts, 1858 to 1898, the Glebe Lands Act, 1888, and certain other Acts, for the year 1907 1488

Belfast Health Commission.—Report to the Local Government Board for Ireland 1488

Agricultural Statistics (Ireland).—Report and tables relating to Irish Agricultural Labourers, for the year 1907–1908 1489

Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland).—Report on the trade in imports and exports at Irish Ports.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table 1489

Polling Districts (County of Westmorland).—Order made by the council of the county of Westmorland 1489

Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks.—Twenty-fifth Report of the Comptroller-General of Patents.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table 1489

THE NAVAL CONFERENCE.

Lord Reay 1489
The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (*Lord Fitzmaurice*) .. 1489

THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

The Earl of Dartmouth 1490
The Under-Secretary of State for War (*Lord Lucas*) 1494
Lord Heneage 1497
Lord Lucas... 1499

Post Office Sites Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^a (according to order) 1499

Companies Bill [H.L.] SECOND READING.]—Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Lord Hamilton of Dalzell 1499

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Bill read 2^a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday, the 16th instant.

Agricultural Holdings Bill [H.L.].—Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3^a."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Bill read 3^a.

The President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries (*Earl Carrington*) 1501

Amendment moved—

"In Clause 47, page 21, line 33, after the word 'tenancy,' to insert the words 'other than a tenancy from year to year.'"—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In Clause 48, page 22, lines 39 and 40, to leave out Subsection (2).—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

Small Holdings and Allotments Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

THE SPECIAL RESERVE.

The Duke of Bedford 1501
Lord Lucas... 1502

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY.

Lord Raglan 1502
Lord Lucas 1504
Lord Heneage 1505

Criminal Appeal (Amendment) Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to amend the Criminal Appeal Act, 1907, with reference to the appointment of the Judges of the Court of Criminal Appeal, and the appointment of a Deputy Registrar—Was presented by the Lord Alverstone; read 1ª; to be printed; and to read 2ª on Tuesday, 16th June. [No. 87] 1506

Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Bill [H.L.].

The Earl of Crewe 1506

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1ª."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

The Marquess of Lansdowne 1508
The Earl of Mayo 1509

On Question, Bill read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday, the 25th instant. (No. 91.)

House adjourned at half-past Six o'clock, to Tuesday, the 16th instant, a quarter-past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: MONDAY, 1ST JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.—Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords]; Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords]; Bristol Tramways Bill [Lords]; Upton Town Hall Bill [Lords]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords]; Rochester Bridge Bill; [Lords]; Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time 1510

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 1510

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PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH.)—Oyster and Mussel Fishery (Bay of Firth) Order Confirmation Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow 1511

Llanelly Gas Bill [LORDS].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments 1511

Padiham Urban District Council Bill; South-West Suburban Water Bill. —As amended, considered; to be read the third time 1511

Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [Lords]; Thames River Steamboat Service Act (1904) Amendment Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed 1511

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 11) Bill.—"Presented by Mr. Masterman; supported by Mr. Burns; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to printed. [Bill 256] 1511

Burnley Corporation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Section A); Reported to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1511

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.—That they have agreed to:—Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill; Loch Levan Water Power Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment; Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, Registration Bill [Lords].

And, also a Bill, intituled, Barry Railway Bill [Lords] 1511

Barry Railway Bill [LORDS].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills 1512

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—Petition in favour; to lie upon the Table 1512

Licensing Bill.—4 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1512

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

Fishery Board (Scotland).—Twenty-sixth Annual Report; to lie upon the Table 1512

East India (Deaths from Plague, etc.).—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table 1512

Import and Export Trade (Ireland).—Report on the Trade in Imports and Exports at Irish Ports; to lie upon the Table 1512

Belfast Health Commission.—Report to the Local Government Board for Ireland; to lie upon the Table 1512

East Africa Protectorate.—Correspondence relating to the Tenure of Land in the East Africa Protectorate; to lie upon the Table 1512

Colonial Reports (Annual).—Colonial Reports Nos. 557 and 558; to lie upon the Table 1512

Sinking Funds.—Account presented, of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed 1513

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Polling Districts (County of Westmorland).—Order made by the Council of the County of Westmorland; to lie upon the Table 1513

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Annual Report of Proceedings under the Tithe Acts, Copyhold Act, 1894, Inclosure Acts, and other Acts; to lie upon the Table 1513

Census of Production Act, 1906.—Rules made under the Act by the Board of Trade; to lie upon the Table 1513

Old-Age Pensions (New Zealand and Germany).—Memorandum on the Old-age Pensions Scheme in force in New Zealand and the Scheme of Insurance against Inualidity and Old-age in force in the German Empire."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 159] 1513

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Regulations for Postal Servants and Territorial Camps 1513
Rebate on Irish Tobacco 1514
Irish Tobacco 1514
Cunard Steamships—Government Condition 1515
Revenue from Tobacco 1515
Indian Import Duties 1515
Old-age Pensions in Germany 1516
Refusal to Sanction Labourers Cottage Scheme at Ballyfarnon 1517
Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of Pat Kilroy 1517
Loss of Dublin Crown Jewels 1518
Rioting at Thurles 1519
Teaching of Cookery and Laundry Work in Irish Schools 1519
Use of Irish Material in Erections of Irish Labourers' Cottages 1520
Evicted Tenants—Case of Samuel Rainey... 1520
Evicted Tenants—Case of Lynch 1521
Territorial Army—Colour-Sergeants acting as Sergeant-Majors and Warrant Rank 1521
Political Prisoners in Crown Colonies 1521
Position of Settlers in the Orange River Colony 1522
Stoppage of Salary of Dinizulu 1522
Officers Accommodation at Tidworth and Bulford 1523
Mismanagement at Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow 1524
Admiralty Employees and the Territorial Camps... 1525
Cost of Living at Achill Island Coastguard Station 1526
Carriage Gates on the North Side of Hyde Park... 1527
Closing of Sub-Post Offices on Weekly Half-holidays 1527
Extension of Belfast Post Office 1527
Third Class Accommodation on the Evening Boat Train from Dover 1528
Promotion of Officers in the Indian Army... 1528
Evicted Tenants—Case of Timothy Shenhan 1529

Claim of Wm. Collopy, Evicted Tenant ... 1529
Case of John Ryan, Evicted Tenant ... 1529
Untenanted Land on the Massey Estate ... 1530
Reinstatement of James Doody of Ardagh ... 1530
Sligo Improvement Scheme... ... 1531
Suspension of the Town Surveyor of Naas ... 1531
Pollution of Rivers by Sheep Dipping ... 1533
Purchase of the Atkins Estate, Tullypunchion ... 1534
Rent Reduction on the Clanricarde Estate... ... 1534
Applications for Holding by Stephen O'Grady of Ballyla ... 1535
Return of Appointments of Irish Magistrates ... 1535

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Case of Seaman Bath ... 1535
Gun Running in the Persian Gulf ... 1536
Naval Casualties ... 1537
Rosyth ... 1537
Dover Harbour Admiralty Works ... 1538
Collision between H.M.S. "Lively" and H.M.S. "Earnest" ... 1538
Alleged Collision of a Submarine ... 1539
H.M.S. "Angler" ... 1539
Naval Mechanicians ... 1540
The Territorial Field Artillery ... 1541
Northumberland Artillery Militia ... 1542
Territorial Sergeant-Majors and Sergeant Instructors ... 1543
Army Council Bill ... 1544
Warwickshire Royal Garrison Artillery ... 1544
The Military Tournament ... 1545
General Baden-Powell's Sunderland Speech ... 1546
War Office Balloon Factory Secrets ... 1546
Officers Bungalows in South Africa ... 1547
New Forest Manœuvres ... 1547
Land Ranges for the Territorial Field Artillery ... 1548
Age Limits for Army Service ... 1549
Transvaal Gold Law ... 1549
Transvaal Local Government Bill ... 1550
Transvaal Civil Service ... 1550
British Indians in the Tranvaal ... 1550
Stoppage on Dinzulu's Salary ... 1551
The New Hebrides ... 1555
Colonial Governor and Martial Law ... 1556
Sino-Burmese Frontier ... 1556
The Case of Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg ... 1557
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Police Court Fines 1558
The Winchester Riots 1559
The Mile End Riot 1559
New Zealand and Danish Tariffs 1560
Railway Brakes 1560
Marine Department Surveyors' Clerks 1561
Royal Commission on the Poor Laws 1561
Northumberland County Council School 1562
Council Buildings and Trade Union Meetings 1563
Princes Square, St. George's-in-the-East 1564
Cash on Delivery System 1565
The Apostle's Creed... 1565
Registration of Teachers 1565
Meals for School Children 1566
Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow 1567
Insanitation at Newcastle 1567
Rural Population of Roxburgh 1568
Agriculture in Roxburgh County 1568
Solway Firth Fishery Laws 1569
Scottish Endowed Schools and the Education Bill 1569
Armagh Post Office Wage Scale 1569
Land Valuation Bill 1570
Royal Visit to Russia 1570
The King and the Ministry... 1570
The Creation of Peerages 1572
Business of the House 1573

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Standing Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C: Mr. Clancy; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Mr. Kavanagh.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Finance Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr Laurence Hardy (*Kent, Ashford*) 1575
Captain Morrison Bell (*Devonshire, Ashburton*) 1584

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'that' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'in view of the growing liabilities of the nation for naval and military defence, old-age pensions, and education, and of the necessity for giving additional relief to ratepayers from the increasing charge for national services now thrown upon the rates, this House regrets that no attempt is made to increase the resources of the Exchequer by broadening the basis of taxation.'"

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

The Postmaster-General (*Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) ... 1587
Mr. Austen Chamberlain (*Worcestershire, E.*) 1595
Mr. Bottomley (*Hackney, S.*) 1605
Mr. Bowles (*Lambeth, Norwood*) 1613
Mr. Walsh (*Lancashire, Ince*) 1621
Mr. Hemmerde (*Denbighshire, E.*)... 1626
Mr. Courthope (*Sussex, Rye*) 1632
Mr. Munro Ferguson (*Leith, Burghs*) 1637
Mr. Beale (*Ayrshire, N.*) 1642
Viscount Helmsley (*Yorkshire, W.R., Thirsk*) 1643
Mr. Chiozza Money (*Paddington, N.*) 1647
Mr. J. F. Mason (*Windsor*) 1635
The Chancellor of the Exchequer (*Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs*) 1660

Motion made, and Question, "That the debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Bonar Law,*)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

Irish Universities (Expenses).—Resolution reported, "That, for the purposes of any Act of the present session to make further provision with respect to University Education in Ireland, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament: (*a*) of the remuneration of the Secretary to the Commissioners, and of any persons appointed or employed by them, and of any expenses incurred by the Commissioners in the execution of such Act; and (*b*) grants for the purposes of either of the new Universities, or of the constituent colleges of the new University at Dublin, or of the governing bodies thereof."

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. A. J. Balfour (*City of London*) 1672
Mr. J. A. Pease (*Essex, Saffron Walden*) 1672
Sir F. Banbury (*City of London*) 1672

Resolution to be further considered To-morrow.

Adjourned at ten minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: TUESDAY, 2ND JUNE, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Provisional Order Bills (No Standing Orders applicable).—Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Bill; Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time To-morrow 1673

Ards and Bangor Railways Bill (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed 1673

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed 1673

Standing Orders.—Resolution reported from the Select Committee, "That, in the case of the River Wandle Protection [Lords], Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

Resolution agreed to 1673

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Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Bill to be considered To-morrow 1673

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Title amended] [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1673

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1674

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow 1674

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill.—Reported without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table 1674

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill.—Reported without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow 1674

King's College, London (Transfer) Bill [Lords].—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon Table 1674

Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment, from the Select Committee on Divorce Bills, with Minutes of Proceedings; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time 1674

Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings in the House of Lords on the Second Reading of Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords], together with the Documents deposited in the cases, be returned to the House of Lords.—(*Mr. Attorney-General*) 1674

PETITIONS.

Children Bill.—3 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1674

Licensing Bill.—6 Petitions against; to lie upon the Table. 4 Petitions for alteration; to lie upon the Table. 29 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1674

Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland) Bill.—2 Petitions in favour; to lie upon the Table 1675

Public Health Officers Bill.—Petition against; to lie upon the Table ... 1675

RETURNS, REPORTS, &c.

East India (Deaths from Plague, etc.)—Return to be printed. [No. 160.] 1675

Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.—Annual Reports of Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc.; to lie upon the Table 1675

Diseases of Animals Acts, 1894 to 1903.—Order, defining a Foreign Animals Quarantine Station at Irongate Wharf; to lie upon the Table 1675

Polling Districts (County of Salop).—Order made by the Council of the County of Salop; to lie upon the Table 1676

Education (Scotland).—Reports, Statistics, etc., on Continuation Classes and Central Institutions (Scotland); to lie upon the Table 1676

Commercial Treaties (Commercial No. 4, 1908.)—Return to lie upon the Table 1676

Trade Reports (Annual Series).—Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4001 and 4002; to lie upon the Table 1676

Government Departments Securities.—Return presented, relative thereto; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 161.] 1676

Public Income and Expenditure.—Return ordered, "of net Public Income and net Public Expenditure" 1676

East India (Financial Statement).—Address for "Return of the Indian Financial Statement" 1676

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

England and France and Death Duties 1677
Compensation for Injuries to West at Enfield Lock Factory 1677
Conflicting Duties of Home Office Surgeons 1677
Dangerous Street Crossing in Theobald's Road 1679
Renewal of Leases of Licensed Premises 1680
Amalgamation of Colonial Audit Branch with the Exchequer and Audit Department 1681
Appointments as Inspecting Surveyor of Customs 1681
Education of Roman Catholic Children in Protestant Countries Abroad ... 1682
Noxious Vapours from Motor Vehicles 1682
Sunday Closing Shops Bill 1683
Medical References under the Workmen's Compensation Act 1683
Fatal Accident at the Workshops for the Blind, Belfast 1684
Protection of Property at Belfast Harbour 1685
Sale of the Estate of J. P. Evans at Knockaderry 1685
Methylated Spirit-drinking in Ulster 1686
Regulations under the Sugar Convention 1686
Darfield Council Schools 1687
Prosecutions under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act 1688
Extension of Public Trustee Act to Ireland 1688
Extra Messing Allowance to Sergeant-Instructors of Volunteers 1689
Closing of Liquor Shops in Bombay 1689
Construction of the Bhama-Teng Yueh Railway 1690
Pay of Colonial Local and Assistant Auditors 1690
Rates of Pay of Colonial Auditors 1692
Re-organisation of Estate Duty Office 1693

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Entrance Examination for the Estate Duty Office Clerkships 1693
Date of Launching of Scottish Fishery Protection Cruisers 1694
Ordnance Survey Maps 1694
Entrance Examination for Admiralty Writers 1694
Overtime of Boys in the Fairfield Shipbuilding Yard 1694
Desecration of Graves at Tisbury 1695
Imports of Wholly-manufactured Articles 1695
Importation of French Silver Goods 1696
Undenominational Religious Teaching—The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds ... 1696

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Joint Naval and Military Exercises 1696
Naval Mechanicians' 1697
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Army Council 1698
Cadet Corps 1698
The Mohmand Rising 1699
The Fighting at Kharga 1700
British Indians in the Transvaal 1701
The Hague Conference 1701
Brussels Sugar Convention 1702
Case of Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg 1703
British Trade in Morocco 1703
Sugar Convention—Additional Act 1704
Congo—Berlin and Brussels Acts 1705
Shanghai Settlement Boundaries 1705
Case of James Koffie of Elmina 1706
The "Knight Commander" 1706
Cuba and the Schooner "Experiment" 1706
The Porte and the Bagdad Railway 1707
Parental Responsibility 1707
Natives at the Franco-British Exhibition 1708
Workmen's Compensation Act and Cruelty to Children 1709
Injury to Atlantic Cables on the Irish Coast 1709
Dismissal of Railway Employees 1710
Stornoway Mail Service 1713
Education and Pauperism 1713
Salterhebble (Halifax) School 1714
Underfed Gateshead Schools Children 1714
Government and Furnishing Contracts 1714
Commissioners of Inland Revenue and the Death Duties 1715
Customs and Excise Charges 1716
Pollution of the Trent 1716

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Small Holdings 1717
Down Survey 1717
Scottish Government Reports 1718
Protection of Scottish Fisheries 1718
Lewis Cottars 1718
Island of Lewis Road Schemes 1719
Morrich Mhor Grazing Rights 1719
The Dublin Crown Jewels 1720
Maynooth 1721
The Irish Lord-Lieutenancy... 1722
De Montalt Estate, Dundrum 1723
Rathkeale Schools 1723
International Prize Court of Appeal 1724
Cancer Research 1725
Education Bill 1725
The House of the Lord Chancellor 1725
The Appointment of Magistrates 1726
Business of the House 1727

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.)—Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

Public-houses (Extension of Facilities).

Mr. William Rutherford (*Liverpool, West Derby*) 1729

Motion made, and Question, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to facilitate the provision of accommodation for supplying food, and of other improvements in connection with premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors by retail,"—(*Mr. William Rutherford*),—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Watson Rutherford, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. James Mason, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Gretton, Colonel Hall Walker, Mr. Goulding, Sir Henry Kimber, Earl of Ronaldshay, and Mr. John Rutherford.

Public-houses (Extension of Facilities) Bill.—"To facilitate the provision of accommodation for supplying food, and of other improvements in connection with premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors by retail," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 16th June, and to be printed. [Bill 257.]

Finance Bill.—Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Amendment to Question [1st June], "That the Bill be now read a second time." Which Amendment was:—

"To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'in view of the growing liabilities of the nation for naval and military defence, old-age pensions, and education, and of the necessity for giving additional relief to ratepayers from the increasing charge for national services now thrown upon the rates,

this House regrets that no attempt is made to increase the resources of the Exchequer by broadening the basis of taxation,"—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy*,)—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question,"

Mr. Bonar Law (*Camberwell, Dulwich*) 1731
The President of the Board of Trade (*Mr. Churchill, Dundee*) 1745
Mr. Hills (*Durham*) 1745
Mr. Summerbell (*Sunderland*) 1760
Mr. Hicks Beach (*Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury*) 1764
Mr. Tomkinson (*Cheshire, Crewe*) 1770
Mr. A. J. Balfour (*City of London*) 1772
The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (*Mr. Asquith, Fifeshire, E.*) 1784

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 367; Noes, 124. (Division List No. 111.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday, 15th June.

Friendly Societies Bill.—Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir Frederick Banbury (*City of London*) 1796
Mr. Staveley-Hill (*Staffordshire, Kingswinford*) 1799
Mr. C. E. Price (*Edinburgh, Central*) 1800
The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (*Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.*) ... 1800
Lord Balcarres (*Lancashire, Chorley*) 1802
Mr. Watt (*Glasgow, College*) 1804
Mr. Goulding (*Worcester*) 1805
Mr. Charles Craig (*Antrim, S.*) 1806

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill.—Order for Second Reading, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Sir F. Banbury 1807
Mr. Charles Craig 1807
The President of the Local Government Board (*Mr. John Burns, Battersea*) 1807
Mr. Rawlinson (*Cambridge University*) 1809
Mr. Rendall (*Gloucestershire, Thornbury*) 1810
Mr. Courthope (*Sussex, Rye*) 1810
Mr. Goulding 1811

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. John Burns.*)

Telegraph (Construction) Bill.—Order for Second Reading, read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. Courthope 1813
Mr. Staveley-Hill 1815

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Courthope.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The Postmaster-General (*Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar*) ... 1816
Lord Balcarres (*Lancashire, Chorley*) 1818
Mr. Mitchell-Thomson (*Lanarkshire, N.W.*) 1818
Sir F. Banbury 1819
Captain Craig (*Down, E.*) 1820

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 172; Noes, 20. (Division List No. 112.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Irish Universities [Expenses] Report.—Order read for further consideration of Resolution, "That, for the purpose of any Act of the present session to make further provision with respect to University education in Ireland, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament: (*a*) of the remuneration of the Secretary to the Commissioners, and of any persons appointed or employed by them, and of any Expenses incurred by the Commissioners in the execution of such Act; and (*b*) of grants for the purposes of either of the new Universities, or of the constituent colleges of the new University at Dublin, or of the governing bodies thereof."

Mr. Carles Craig 1823
Sir Philip Magnus (*London University*) 1827

Amendment proposed :—

"In line 9, at end, to add the words 'Provided that no part of the moneys authorised by this Resolution shall be used or applied for the purposes of denominational education.'"—(*Mr. Charles Craig.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. Dillon (*Mayo, E.*) 1828
Captain Craig 1832
The Attorney-General for Ireland (*Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange*) ... 1834
Mr. Rawlinson 1836
Mr. Adkins (*Lancashire, Middleton*) 1837
Sir F. Banbury 1837
Mr. Cherry 1838

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 22; Noes, 149. (Division List No. 113.)

Resolution agreed to.

Adjourned at twenty minutes after Eleven o'clock.

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THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(*AUTHORISED EDITION*)

IN THE

THIRD SESSION OF THE *TWENTY-EIGHTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED
KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET
THE TWENTY-NINTH DAY OF JANUARY IN THE EIGHTH YEAR OF THE
REIGN OF

HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

SEVENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 19*th May*, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Lincoln Corporation Bill.—A witness ordered to attend the Select Committee.

Rochdale Corporation Bill. Read 3^{a}, with the Amendments; and passed, and returned to the Commons.

Cambourne Water Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^{a}, and referred to the Examiners.

Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments: The said Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Loch Leven Water Power Order Confirmation Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1^{a},; to be printed; and (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899,) deemed to have been read 2^{a} (The Lord Herschell), and reported from the Committee. (No. 69).

Metropolitan Police Provisional Order Bill.—Brought from the Commons and read 1^{a}; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. (No. 70.)

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Committed.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Order (No. 4) Bill [H.L.].—Committed: The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

PETITIONS.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

Petitions in favour of: Of Zoological Society of London; Linnean Society of London; Selbourne Society; Royal Society for Protection of Birds; and

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

persons signing (1); read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

NAVY (HYDROGRAPHER'S) REPORT.

Report on Admiralty Surveys for the year 1907, by the Hydrographer:

TRADE.

Annual Statement of the trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions 1907, compared with the four preceding years. Volume I. Summaries, abstract and detailed tables of imports and exports.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 3996, Russia (Batoum and District).

ALIENS ACT, 1905.

Second Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector under the Aliens Act (Part I.), and a statement with regard to the expulsion of aliens (Part II.) in respect of the year 1907.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

NEW BILLS.

POST OFFICE SITES BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to enable His Majesty's Postmaster-General to acquire lands in London, Glasgow, Bolton, Devonport, Dover, Ilford, and Stroud for the Public Service, and for other purposes.—Was presented by the Lord Granard (*E. Granard*); read 1ª; to be printed; and referred to the Examiners. (No. 71.)

WEEKLY REST-DAY BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to secure a weekly rest-day—Was presented by the Viscount Hill; read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 72.)

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING].

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, this Bill has been introduced on behalf of the Linnean Society, the Zoological Society, the Society for the Preservation of Birds, and last, though not least, the Selborne Society. I have also presented a petition from the members of the Royal Society. In fact, it has the general support of the naturalists of the country, and especially of all lovers of birds. It is no doubt of a somewhat peculiar character, but the circumstances are exceptional.

The most beautiful species of birds are being rapidly exterminated. At the plume auctions held in London during the last six months of 1907, I am informed by Mr. Buckland, who has done so much to promote this movement, that there were catalogued 19,742 skins of the birds of paradise, 1,411 packages of the nesting plumes of the white heron (representing the feathers of nearly 115,000 birds), besides immense numbers of the feathers and skins of almost every known species of ornamental plumaged bird. For the year the sales of egrets amounted to 190,000, and of birds of paradise over 28,000. At the June sale, held at the Commercial Sale-Rooms, 1,386 crowned pigeons' heads were sold, while among miscellaneous bird-skins one firm alone catalogued over 20,000 kingfishers. A deplorable feature of recent sales is the offer of large number of lyre birds' tails and of albatross quills.

The constant repetition of such figures as the above—and these plume sales take place at least every two months—shows that the Legislature must choose between the extermination or the protection of the birds in question. A precedent for legislation on this subject exists in the law that now obtains in the State of New York, where the entire feather trade of the United States has its centre; according to this law no wild birds, other than certain species named therein, and birds for which there is an open season, can be taken or possessed at any time, dead or alive, except under the authority of a certificate, and no part of the plumage, skin, or body of any protected bird can be sold or had in possession for sale. I understand from the Secretary of the Game Preservation Department of the Department of Agriculture in the United States that the example of the State of New York has been followed by several other States.

We commend this Bill to the favourable consideration of the House on three main grounds :—(1) scientific ; (2) æsthetic ; (3) humanitarian ; and I think I might add a fourth, namely, economic. As regards the first, it is evident that unless the slaughter is stopped several species of birds will be within a few years absolutely exterminated. Once destroyed they could never be replaced, and from a scientific point of view this would be deplorable. Then I come to the æsthetic aspect of the question. It is not only the fact that some species will be utterly annihilated, but that the victims are just the most beautiful ; in fact, their beauty is their ruin. Moreover, birds' feathers in hats are, I submit, not ornamental, but, under the circumstances, repulsive. This is so self-evident that I feel I need not, and ought not to, occupy your Lordships' time in elaborating a proof of what no one will, I think, attempt to deny.

Lastly, I come to the humanitarian reasons for the Bill. We all know that birds, while beautiful at all times, are pre-eminently so at the breeding season. Just when our best feelings would induce us to give them a close time, they are most ruthlessly destroyed. The history of the snowy heron, from which the so-called egrets, or "ospreys" are obtained, is especially pathetic. They used to be a numerous and widely distributed species—harmless and beneficial to man. Now they are greatly reduced in numbers, and indeed in some places exterminated. At most times the birds are wary and difficult to approach, but at the breeding season their habits alter. They will run any risks themselves rather than allow their young to starve. Of this the hunters take a mean advantage. They wait under the trees and shoot down the old birds as they are bringing food for their little ones.

Mr. Pearson, Secretary of the North Carolina Audubon Society, has given a graphic description of the scene. He said—

"In the tall bushes, growing in a secluded pond in a swamp, a colony of herons had their nesting home. I accompanied a squirrel hunter one day to the spot, and the scene which met our eyes was not a pleasant one ; I had expected to see the beautiful herons about their nests, or standing on the trees near by, but not a living one could be found, while here and there in the mud lay the lifeless forms of some of the birds. They had been shot down and the skin bearing the plumes stripped from their backs. Flies were busily at work, and they swarmed up with hideous buzzings as we approached each spot where a victim lay. This was not the worst ; in four of the nests young orphan birds could be seen who were clamouring piteously for food which their dead parent could never again bring to them. One little one was lying with its neck hanging out of the nest, happily now past suffering."

At this time the destruction of the parents means an even more cruel death to the young also. Thus, the 190,000 egret plumes sold last year mean at least 500,000 deaths.

The same thing is happening not only over Florida and the whole Gulf Coast of the United States, but also in California and great districts of South America. Dealers often state that "aigrettes" are manufactured, but this is not so ; man has never yet been able to imitate successfully these beautiful plumes. All that are offered for sale have been taken from the backs of the smaller white herons. Even the stiff plumes, or "stubs," are not manufactured but are the plumes of a larger species belonging to the same family. The so-called "ospreys" used to be worn in the Army, but they were given up on account of the cruelty they involve. No one would say that our fellow countrywomen are less humane than the authorities of the War Office, but the fact is that they do not realise the suffering to which they are parties.

I am glad to see that this Bill has been most cordially and sympathetically received by the Press, but one or two writers have expressed the opinion that it would have little chance if women had votes. On the contrary, I firmly believe they would welcome it. Her Majesty the Queen, we gratefully recognise, has done much to check the wearing of plumes. The Englishwomen are indeed few who would wear an "osprey" if they realised that it involved not only the slaughter during the nesting time of the parent bird, but the starvation of the whole brood of young. Again, it is sometimes said that the only effect of excluding feathers here would be that they would be sold abroad. If this were so, we should then at any rate have no responsibility; we should not be parties to this cruel trade. But if your Lordships and the other House pass this Bill, English ornithologists and lovers of birds will appeal to our brother naturalists abroad, and we believe they would initiate similar legislation on the Continent and thus put an end to this cruel, wanton, and barbarous slaughter.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*Lord Avebury.*)

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: My Lords, I hope your Lordships will be able to give a Second Reading to this Bill. I can add but very little to that which the noble Lord has said. If there are any objections to this Bill they will probably come from the trade, that is from the dealers in feathers and plumes. The value of the plumes to the wearers does not consist in the fact that the feathers belong to rare birds, but that the manufactured plume is the fashion of the moment. At the present rate of destruction the extinction of many of the most beautiful creations of Nature is inevitable, and the prohibition of the use of the plumage now would be only anticipating what, as far as the trade is concerned, must be the result in a few years. This Bill seeks to bring about by the preservation of the birds now that condition as far as the supply of birds' feathers to the trade is concerned which must ensue on their destruction in a few years time.

EARL BEAUCHAMP: My Lords, I am sure the objects of this Bill will commend themselves to every Member of your Lordships' House. This is a matter in which a great many of your Lordships will have taken a sympathetic interest; and it is impossible for anybody either to hear or read the account which has been quoted by the noble Lord who moved the Second Reading, and which I think I have read in the public Press, of the condition in which the herons' nests were found after a visit from some of the agents of the dealers, without feeling that some action ought to be taken.

Lord Avebury.

My duty this evening is rather to express the hesitation felt by the official mind as to whether the Bill, as drawn, will entirely accomplish the object of the noble Lord. My noble friend will be one of the first to realise the distinction between the prohibition of imports and exports, and I venture to suggest that it might be more efficacious to prohibit exports from our Colonies rather than to prohibit imports into this country. Steps have already been taken in the Bermudas, Barbados, Trinidad, Fiji, Natal, St. Vincent, and elsewhere, to prevent the exportation of these birds and their plumage. Then, a large quantity of plumage is brought into this country, made up, and exported to the Continent, and it is not impossible that such legislation would divert that trade to the Continent without the advantage sought for being attained.

I am not sure that the noble Lord would have the entire sympathy of the public, or, at any rate, of the ladies, in the passing of this Bill, but I can assure him that His Majesty's Government are very anxious to assist him in securing the objects he has in view. There is one other consideration, and that is that there are some species in danger of extermination which, though very beautiful, are often a great inconvenience and sometimes a considerable nuisance in the countries in which they are found. An Australian experience occurs to my mind at the moment with regard to the sweet-briar. This is a plant which we all rejoice to see in our hedgerows, but it is one of the most inconvenient and obnoxious plants to the sheep breeder in Australia. In the same way a bird which we may think ought to be preserved for its beauty may be a great nuisance in the country from which it comes, and the people there may think it desirable that there should be fewer of them.

Therefore, the question arises, what will be the best step to take in order to give effect to this Bill? I would venture to ask your Lordships to agree to the Second Reading this afternoon, and I would then suggest that it should be referred to a Select Committee. The noble Lord himself has admitted that the Bill is of an exceptional character, and I think, in the circumstances, its reference to a Select Committee would be of considerable advantage. If the noble Lord would agree to that course the Select Committee would be able to consider the suggestion that representations should be made to foreign countries as to how far they would be willing to assist by preventing export, which I am not at all sure is not really the most efficacious way of preventing the distinction of these birds.

*The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I think the course proposed by the noble Earl who has just spoken is probably the most convenient, and I hope my noble friend will agree to it. My noble friend made, I think, a very strong case both upon humanitarian and upon scientific grounds, for some effort to prevent the extinction of a number of interesting species of birds. I feel very decided sympathy with him, and I hope that I may be pardoned for saying that I believe I am one of the few who have taken a practical step in the direction my noble friend recommends; because, if I am not mistaken, it was while I was at the War Office that my military advisers agreed to accept a substitute for what used to be known as "osprey plumes," but which, I need not say, had not a single osprey feather in them, but which, nevertheless, were, I think, obtained by the destruction of a very harmless and interesting bird, the white egret. I think the noble Earl is quite right in suggesting that we should make it our endeavour to obtain the co-operation of foreign countries, for without that I am afraid the success of the Bill will not be very great.

*The Lord PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Lord Tweedmouth): My Lords, whilst desiring to support the object of the Bill I would point out that Clause 2 proposes to give certain powers to the Privy Council which my advisers tell me are not altogether what they should be, and I am going to ask your Lordships to accept an Amendment to this clause when the Bill reaches Committee. With regard to the general question, the only fault I find with the Bill is that I am afraid its provisions will not carry out what is desired. You cannot prevent birds being killed in their own habitat; people will go on killing them just in the same way, and I think that if the noble Lord will make inquiries in the millinery shops of London he will find that a very large number of feathered hats come from Paris, and perhaps still more are sent from Germany marked as from France.

Lord ASHBOURNE: My Lords, it is quite obvious that any measure purporting to interfere with fashion, and, to a certain extent, with trade, must be surrounded with difficulty. The noble Lord who has introduced this Bill has taken the only practical step that has yet been suggested to bring the matter to the notice of the public, and by that means to influence fashion. I think we are under a great obligation to my noble friend. I am sure that if he will preside over the Select Committee he will be able to guide it to a wise and sensible conclusion. I think this discussion will do a great deal of good. It puts the matter in a practical shape before the minds of men and women. We know that the highest lady in the land has done much to check the wearing of plumes, and I cannot help thinking that by degrees fashion will play a potent part in putting an end to the destruction of these birds.

*The Lord BISHOP of SOUTHWARK: My Lords, I am glad that the noble and learned Lord who has just sat down has given a warmer expression of sympathy than was elicited from the noble Earl who represents the official mind in this matter. I do not think we can rely very much on the influence of opinion and fashion. This is undoubtedly not a new matter. It has been for a long time before leaders of fashion, and the great influence to which the noble and learned Lord referred has been exerted, but I am afraid the efforts that have been made have failed. I hope the treatment which it is proposed to give the Bill will not be a dilatory treatment, because we know not only that the thing wants doing but that it wants doing quickly.

*LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, I am obliged to your Lordships for the sympathetic manner in which you have received the Bill. With regard to the point made by Lord Tweedmouth, if he will look at the words at the bottom of the first page of the Bill he will see that it will be impossible for milliners to bring over from Paris hats containing plumage; and as regards Lord Beauchamp's statement that it would be more efficacious to stop export, I would remind him that a great number of these birds come from South America, Russia, and China—countries from which it is impossible for us to stop export. It is only recently that these birds have been killed in these countries in such large numbers, and it has been largely owing to the fact that there has been such a profitable sale in this country. Therefore, if we stopped the sale in this country we should put an end to a very important reason for the destruction of these birds. We do not wish to prevent the agriculturists of the countries concerned from taking any steps that may be necessary to deal with birds that may be an annoyance, but I believe it is felt that on the whole birds do a very great deal of good to agriculture. As it is the opinion of the Leaders on both sides of the House that it would be desirable to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, I shall be very glad to adopt that course, if your Lordships are good enough to agree to the Second Reading.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2^a, and referred to a Select Committee.

EAST HARDWICK (WEST RIDING) SCHOOL.

*VISCOUNT HALIFAX rose to ask the President of the Council whether the Minister of Education, when he confirmed on appeal the decision of the West Riding County Council to erect a council school at East Hardwick, was aware of the following facts:—That the existing voluntary school was enlarged in 1871, when the population amounted to 282; that the present population is 144, and the average attendance thirty, of whom only twenty-six reside in the township, and that the accommodation admits of 14 cubic feet per child; that the managers submitted plans to the education authority carrying out their requirements, viz., to provide a playground, cloak-room, and lavatory in accordance with the recommendations of Mr. Marvin, the Inspector of the Board of Education, made in November, 1905, and that such plans never received the sanction of the local authority, and the Board of Education refused to allow the work to be carried out until such sanction was obtained; that it was not until May, 1907, that the West Riding Education Committee definitely refused to sanction the improvements proposed to be carried out in accordance with the report of the Inspector of the Board of Education, and decided that a new school was necessary; that a petition signed by every ratepayer and parent of children attending the school protesting against this decision had been forwarded to the Board of Education, and that the cost of the proposed school, to accommodate sixty children, would inflict a burden on the ratepayers of East Hardwick of 1s. in the £ in addition to the existing education rate of 8d. in the £ in a purely rural hamlet; that under Section 9 of the Education Act, 1902, the Board of Education in deciding on appeal as to the provision of a new school shall have regard:—(1) To the interests of secular instruction; (2) to the wishes of the parents as to the education of their children; (3) to the economy of the rates.

"To ask further, how, in view of the fact that the plans submitted by the managers to carry out the requirements of the Board of Education, which had met with the full approval of the district Sub-Committee, to whom the West Riding County Council submitted them, were never returned by the Board of Education to the managers so as to enable them to carry out the requirements of the Board, and have been in the hands of the Board ever since March, 1907, the Board can now condemn the Managers for delay, and propose to take compulsory powers in order to grant the demand of the West Riding County Council for a new council school, when they have never given the managers a chance of carrying out the requirements of their own inspector, by giving their sanction to the plans in question."

The noble Viscount said: My Lords, I think it will be for the convenience of your Lordships if, in asking the Lord President of the Council the Questions which stand in my name on the Paper, I give a very short statement of the facts of the case. I know the locality perfectly well, and I think the facts which I shall put before your Lordships do not admit of any dispute. The East Hardwick school has been carried on for 250 years as a Church of England school, and it has served a small rural hamlet comprising some 627 acres, with a rateable value of about £600. In 1872 when the population reached 282, which is its highest point, the school buildings were considerably improved and enlarged. Since then the population has decreased—in 1881 to 228, in 1891 to 193, in 1901 to 155, and at present, I believe, the population is 144. The average attendance in the school is, I believe, 30; this allows 14 superficial feet for each child. If 10 feet were allowed there would be room for 50 children in the school.

For some time prior to June, 1905, correspondence had been going on between the Education Committee of the West Riding and the trustees of the school with regard to the necessity of providing a cloakroom, lavatory, and playground. There was great difficulty in finding accommodation for the playground, and the managers referred to the Board of Education. The Secretary to the Board, in a letter dated 10th July, 1905, wrote in regard to the playground—

> "I am, however, to inform you that in the opinion of the Board the local education authority have no power to require your managers to provide a playground."

That was the opinion of the Board of Education in 1905. The managers, however, did their best to provide a playground. The difficulties which they encountered postponed their being able to make definite proposals for a playground until some time later than that at which they did send in plans for the other improvements; but they were eventually able to send in definite plans for a playground, and not only that, but to offer to the local education authority the exact piece of ground which the inspector of the local authority had said would be sufficient and desirable for the purpose of a playground.

On 21st June, 1905, the trustees, after consultation with the vicar, the Charity Commissioners, the Board of Education, and the West Riding Education Committee, authorised tenders for the work of constructing the lavatory, cloakroom, etc., as soon as the plans had been sanctioned by the local education authority and the Board of Education. On 29th September, Mr. Marvin, on behalf of the Board of Education, visited the school, approved of the proposed alterations, and reported accordingly. On 8th November an inspector visited the school on behalf of the West Riding Education Committee, and his report approved them also, with certain provisos as to the playground. On 10th November of that year plans were submitted by the trustees to the West Riding Education Committee, and in January, 1906, the trustees, having overcome the difficulties, agreed to lease a portion of the glebe land for a playground to enable them to carry out the necessary conditions. In accordance with this agreement, plans for the playground were subsequently submitted to the local education authority. So that definite plans, considered sufficient both by the inspector of the Board of Education and by the inspector of the local education authority, were submitted to the West Riding Education Committee.

All this time the plans for the building, submitted to the local education authority, had neither been approved nor returned to the managers, and they were advised by the Board of Education that they had no power to improve the school without the sanction of the West Riding Education Committee. On 16th November, 1906, that body, though they had never returned the plans or communicated with the managers, announced their intention to provide a new school to accommodate sixty children. The managers remonstrated, and in March, 1907, the West Riding Education Committee's architect attended the school—that is more than a year after the plans for the improvement of the buildings had been sent in—and proposals to erect a cloakroom and lavatory and to provide a certain amount of glebe land for a playground were again discussed, and the managers' willingness to provide the same without cost to the ratepayers when their plans were sanctioned was again brought forward. The managers were prepared to do this at their own cost, and the architect promised that the proposals should receive the early attention of the West Riding Education Committee.

Two months later the Education Committee definitely refused to sanction the plans submitted on 10th November, 1905, and never returned them, and intimated their intention, with the consent of the Board of Education, to compel the building of a new council school to accommodate sixty scholars at a cost of £14 per head, making a total cost of £1,000 for the whole work. Upon this a public meeting of ratepayers was held on 22nd June, 1907, to protest against the county council's proposal to saddle the hamlet with a council school which they did not wish to have, and all were unanimous in condemnation of the proposal. The managers appealed to the Board of Education and supported their appeal by a petition from all the inhabitants of the district and the ratepayers, but the Board of Education, under Mr. McKenna, refused to alter its decision and that of the local education authority, and did not grant a legal inquiry in accordance with its powers. Nor did Mr. McKenna consider, as I submit he was bound to do in making his decision, under Section 9 of the Education Act, 1902, first, the interests of secular education; secondly, the wishes of the parents as to the education of their children; and, thirdly, the economy of the rates.

When this decision became known a lady who lives in the locality very generously offered to build a new school to accommodate fifty children, the school to remain a voluntary school similar to the one it was to replace. The West Riding Education Authority, however, refused the offer, the chairman stating that it was a deathbed repentance, whereas the delay in carrying out the alterations was entirely due to the county council and not to the managers of the school. An appeal to the Board of Education met with the same result, the vicar of East Hardwick, who attended on behalf of the offer to build a new school, being told that Mr. McKenna had already decided that there was to be a council school. The Board of Education, on the petition of the West Riding County Council, has now introduced a Bill into your Lordships' House, on 5th May, asking for compulsory powers for the purpose of compelling Mr. Thornton, of Pontefract, to sell part of his land for the site of the proposed new council school, the West Riding Education Committee having failed to find a single owner of property in East Hardwick willing to sell and for such a purpose.

The cost to the ratepayers of a council school will amount to an additional rate of 1s. in the £, making a total education rate of 1s. 8d. in the £. That is a plain statement, I believe, of the facts. There is no pretence for saying that there is not adequate accommodation for the children who attend the school. There is accommodation in the school for fifty children. The Education Blue-book, published in 1907, shows accommodation for fifty children in the existing school, and, in point of fact, only thirty children attend. All the children who attend the school, with the exception of one, are over five. The figures supplied by the local education authority to the Board of Education as to the number of children of school age whom the new provided school would serve, include all children over three, two boys attending the Pontefract grammar school and who would not attend this school at East Hardwick, and eleven children who are in the habit of attending a school belonging to another parish. No legal inquiry into the matter was granted by Mr. McKenna after he had received the petition from the inhabitants of the district.

In regard to the interests of secular education, if the proposed alterations were such as to make the school sufficient, as is admitted on the report of both inspectors, obviously the secular education would be quite as good in the one building as in the suggested new school. The wishes of the inhabitants have been entirely disregarded, as shown by their petition and their absolute refusal to sell any property for a provided school. And in regard to rates, I have already told your Lordships that it will mean an increase of 1s. in the £ in the education rate paid by this poor and small hamlet. Disentangled from complications, the plain fact is that the local education authority required certain improvements to be made in the East Hardwick school, including the provision of a playground, which, as I have informed your Lordships, the Board of Education said they had no power to compel; that the proposed alterations were considered sufficient; that the managers did find a playground, though it was not necessary for them to do so; and that, in spite of all this, the local education authority, with the consent of the Board of Education, refused to allow the plans to be carried out and insisted upon building a new provided school, at a great increase to the rates and contrary to the wishes of all the inhabitants. In face of these facts it is almost impossible to deny that what really determined the action, both of the Board of Education and the local education authority, was the desire to substitute a provided school under the local authority for the non-provided school which had always existed in the parish. This is made sufficiently obvious by the fact that when the managers offered to build a new school their offer was refused.

I know what will be said in answer to my questions. It will be said, first of all, that the plans were retained by inadvertence, which I think is an extremely lame excuse; and, next, that the plans were carefully considered and deemed insufficient. If the proposed alterations, as is not denied, were considered sufficient up to 1907, what suddenly determined their insufficiency in May, 1907? I do not like to make the suggestion, but it is almost impossible that the thought should not occur to one's mind that it was the same administrative action which has been threatening the training colleges, which in this case was applied to an elementary school in a poor country village. In regard to the detention of the plans, I would like to draw your Lordships' attention, for it is an instructive comment upon all this, to what occurred in the neighbouring hamlet of Wentbridge. There there was a non-provided school which was admittedly insufficient. The managers offered to build a new school, and submitted plans for that purpose. The plans were detained by the local education authority, and representations were made to the Board of Education that the managers were unwilling to take any steps to meet the requirements of the local education authority. Upon the strength of those representations, which were false, as I shall show in a manner that cannot be contradicted, the Board of Education sanctioned the erection of a provided school. The managers were subsequently able to prove to the Board of Education that the information supplied to them by the local education authority was incorrect, with the result that the Board of Education rescinded their Order. In their letter to the local education authority, a copy of which I have in my hand, the Board of Education state definitely that inasmuch as they had ascertained that the information supplied to them was incorrect they had rescinded their Order to erect a new provided school. The managers were in consequence allowed to carry out their plans, and this hamlet has now a non-provided voluntary school in the place of the provided school which would have been forced upon them if they had not been able to prove to the Board of Education that the information supplied by the local education authority was, to use a mild expression, absolutely incorrect.

It appears to me that when we are told, as we are constantly being told, that the inhabitants of this country are quite indifferent whether they have a denominational or an undenominational school, the facts in the case of this little school of East Hardwick prove diametrically the reverse; and I would ask your Lordships what chance of peace there is likely to be in regard to this education question if in all the single school districts in the country, in which the single schools are largely Church schools, we are to have this sort of treatment adopted towards them on the part of the local education authority? I myself attach much greater weight to the question of the character of the school than I do even to the question of the rate; but I think your Lordships will admit that the question of the rate is not an unimportant one, and that it is absolutely intolerable that the rate should be raised against the wish of the whole of the inhabitants when everything that the parish itself wished for, and was necessary for educational purposes, could be got without difficulty and without adding a penny to the rates. I must say I think it a very astonishing thing that proposals of this sort should come from those who profess that the wishes of the inhabitants should be respected, and that such proposals, so diametrically opposed to the pecuniary and other interests of the parishioner, should be sanctioned by the Board of Education. I now beg to put the Questions standing in my name, and I would ask the President of the Council whether, in view of these circumstances, he will not withdraw the Bill for taking compulsory powers and give the managers an opportunity of carrying out the improvements which they are quite ready to do.

Lord TWEEDMOUTH: My Lords, I find myself in rather a curious position in regard to the House and the Questions of the noble Viscount. I have no official knowledge of the subject at all, I have only been at the Privy Council now for about a month; and this matter has not been brought under my notice before to-day. In any case I do not know whether the Privy Council has any power to deal with it. So far as I can make out, the Privy Council consists principally of secretaries and messengers. There is a splendid room, and a splendid inkstand, but otherwise I do not think the President of the Council has anything to do. At any rate, the control of education and the control of agriculture has been taken away from the President of the Council. In this matter, therefore, I must confine myself to reading the brief which has been supplied to me by the Board of Education. I do not think it is a good custom for Ministers to read typewritten replies, but I am sorry to say that in this case I am compelled to follow that course, and I apologise to the House therefor.

It appears that in 1901 the Board's attention was called to the absence of a playground for this school. In 1903 the Board were informed that the state of the premises was unsatisfactory (there was no cloakroom, lavatory, or water supply, and the roof was leaking) and that there was no playground. The attention of the managers was called to these defects, and they were warned that, unless the defects in the premises were removed, no further annual grant would be paid. On December 13th, 1904, the Board were informed that the defects in the premises had not been removed, and they again called the attention of the managers to the matter on 23rd February, 1905. It appears that plans were prepared by the managers for the improvement of the premises and submitted to the local education authority early in 1905, and the local education authority returned the plans to the managers, with certain additional requirements. Plans for the improvement of the premises, but not including a playground, reached the Board from the managers on 6th July, 1905. On 10th July, 1905, these were sent by the Board, in accordance with their universal practice, to the local education authority for their observations. Considerable discussion took place at this period as to the necessity for a playground. A special visit to the school was paid by His Majesty's inspector, and he advised that the requirement of a playground should be supported, and on 28th September, 1905, the Board endorsed his recommendation. The plans were again returned by the managers to the Board, still without provision for a playground, on 15th December, 1906, when they were again sent by the Board to the local education authority. The local education authority had previously, on 4th December, 1906, given notice to provide a new council school. On 8th February, 1907, the local education authority informed the Board that, on the advice of their architect, they were unable to approve the managers' plans. On 18th February, 1907, the Board received an appeal against the proposed new council school from the ratepayers and inhabitants of East Hardwick. The managers' plans, including the provision of a playground, appear to have again reached the Board from the local education authority on 5th March, 1907. These plans were at once sent to

His Majesty's inspector, who reported that, even if they were carried out, the premises would still be very poor. The local education authority expressed a similar opinion on 26th March, 1907. On 19th May, 1907, the Board decided, after consideration of all the circumstances of the case, that the proposed now council school was necessary. This decision was communicated to the local education authority and the managers, and, in letters dated 17th June and 18th July, 1907, the Board explained to the managers that they had taken the proposals of the managers into account in forming their decision that a council school was necessary, and that they considered that, even if the alterations, including the provision of a playground, were carried out, the premises would still be very poor, and not fit on that account for recognition permanently. The plans were, by inadvertence, not returned to the managers when the Board's decision was communicated to them, and the managers did not call attention to the omission until 16th April, 1908. The plans were returned on 30th April, 1908. It will be seen from these facts that this case was decided against the managers of the voluntary school on its merits and not on the ground of delay. Having decided that the proposed improvements in the voluntary school would not make it fit for permanent recognition and that the erection of a new council school was necessary, the Board had no alternative but to assent to the exercise of compulsory powers by the local education authority, since they were unable to acquire a site by agreement. I am afraid that is all the Answer I can give the noble Viscount. It is, I think, a very clear and definite Answer. As to the merits of it, I cannot take any responsibility.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I should like to call attention to the reply which has just been given by the Lord President of the Council. What is the mode by which His Majesty's Government can be approached in your Lordships' House on educational matters? Here is a question brought up, and the Lord President tells us he is afraid he has no official knowledge on the subject and apparently has no access to such knowledge.

LORD TWEEDMOUTH: I have given the House the report of the Board of Education on the matter.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: Are we unable to obtain any responsible replies to such Questions in this House?

LORD TWEEDMOUTH: I represent the Board of Education in this House.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: The noble Lord says he represents the Board of Education. That being so, I do not understand why he has no official knowledge. I am puzzled by the statement of the noble Lord that powers in regard to education had been taken away from the Privy Council. Presumably powers with respect to education lie somewhere, and there must be some one in the House responsible for answering Questions in relation to education.

I pass from the frame that surrounds the Answer, and come to the Answer itself. As far as I could see, the noble Lord read an account corresponding in its entirety to the statement which had been previously made by the noble Viscount. If the facts are accurate, what is the explanation? The point is not so much the bullying attitude of the local authority as the endorsement given to that attitude by His Majesty's Government. We have been told over and over again that we should trust the local authorities in matters of this kind. We have heard many arguments in the last few years to that effect, and I plead guilty to being one of those who have constantly urged that our duty in these matters is to leave the responsibility upon the local authority who have been entrusted by Parliament with these important functions. In this instance it appears to me, as far as I can follow it, that the local education authority not only have no case, but have not even attempted to present a case.

But I confess that what staggers me is less the instance of the tyranny of the local education authority—though that is somewhat alarming and bewildering, for it is exercised contrary to the wishes of every ratepayer in the parish and of the parent of every child in the school—than the endorsement given to such action by the Board of Education, who appear to have stated that they saw no ground for regarding the action of the local education authority as other than right. If I understood the reply of my noble friend just now, he stated that the Government had no alternative but to sanction a council school, that being, by the admitted facts, contrary to the wishes of all the parishioners and all the parents. But I would point out that a lady had offered to build an entirely new school, which would have saved the whole of the expense to the parish. The argument, therefore, as to the inadequacy of the old building entirely falls to the ground.

The Board of Education have taken up this position in the teeth of the Act of Parliament, which says that in deciding cases of this sort they are to have regard, first, to the interests of secular instruction (obviously not impaired by the nature of the building, which was to be new), secondly, to the wishes of the parents as to the education of their children, the parents being in this case unanimous; and, thirdly, to the economy of the rates, upon which must be placed now the whole expenditure which a private individual would have been willing to bear. The statement which we have heard from the Lord President did not seem to me to be any attempt at a practical reply.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: My Lords, while we are on this subject I should like to say a word or two as manager of a voluntary school under the West Riding County Council in connection with which we have suffered very much the same kind of treatment as that of which the noble Viscount complains. I approach the matter from a rather different point of view from that of the most rev. Primate. The most rev. Primate says he is not so much concerned with the tyranny of the West Riding County Council or the local education authority as with the answer of His Majesty's Government. I think the answer of His Majesty's Government really amounts to very little. My noble friend below me, Lord Tweedmouth, explained the difficulty he was in, and that this was an intricate matter of which he had no personal knowledge. What I wish to ask is whether, where you have the tyranny of a body like the West Riding County Council, the Board of Education is of any use to us? Or is it absolutely powerless when it comes to close quarters on a matter of this kind with a strong and determined body like the education authority of the West Riding County Council?

In my particular case, the local education authority absolutely disregarded, not only the wishes, but the experience of the people for whom they were supposed to be acting. It was the case of a small voluntary school established in an old toll-house. I quite admit that the school was perfectly inadequate to the educational needs or ideals of the present day, but there were only twenty-five or twenty-six children in attendance, and sometimes the number went down to sixteen; it was never above twenty-eight. The other day we were told—and I was perfectly willing to recognise the justice of it—that we were to put up a new school to serve this side of the district. We suggested sites and gave reasons and so on, but the local education authority paid no attention to any suggestions we made, although they were accompanied by arguments which we thought to the point regarding a likelihood of a dislocation of population. They chose their own site and put up the school.

I do not mind so much their disregarding the site we recommended, but as a matter of fact they have erected a school which will accommodate sixty or seventy children, at a cost to the ratepayers of between £1,100 and £1,200. And now that they have done this and have discovered that there are not nearly enough children to fill the school, we are to be put to a large additional expenditure to provide a heating apparatus, because it is pointed out that the few children who will attend will be starved to death in the cold weather unless this provision is made. When I saw the plans I suggested one or two alterations; I suggested a limestone wall, but instead of that they have given us the sort of railings which you find round villas at Surbiton.

They paid no attention at all to our suggestions, and the building they have erected is the sort of thing you see in the Bois de Boulogne where you go and take tea. It has a chalet appearance with Surbiton railings round it. I gave the ground and was glad to do it, but when I was asked to be present and open the new school, I replied that I would have nothing to do with such wanton waste of public money. We did all we could to bring our views forward, but when the matter went to the Board of Education the Board were powerless or afraid to do anything. I should like to ask whether that is a desirable state of things.

*VISCOUNT KNUTSFORD: My Lords, I venture to think that this state of things is very unsatisfactory, both as regards this House and the information it gets, and also as regards the particular case brought forward by Lord Halifax. I am puzzled to understand the position which the Lord President of the Council takes up. When a Minister answers a question he is supposed to have looked through the Papers himself, and to deal with the House as one who is satisfied that the statement he is making is correct; whereas I understand Lord Tweedmouth has merely read to us a typewritten document supplied by the Board of Education, and with which he says he has nothing to do. He simply read it without having verified it in any respect himself, nor has he favoured us with his opinion upon the subject brought before us. I consider that a very unsatisfactory state of things. If the Lord President of the Council cannot answer for the Board of Education we should have some other noble Lord who can. The other point which seems to me to be very unsatisfactory is that we have had no answer to the question why, when an appeal was made to the Board of Education, backed up by all the inhabitants of the district, and the ratepayers, the Board of Education did not hold an inquiry under Section 9 of the Education Act of 1892 to verify the local statements, instead of simply upholding the local education authority without any inquiry at all. I consider these two matters extremely unsatisfactory, and I hope we shall have some further explanation of them.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, I would be the last person to say anything of an unfriendly character towards the noble Lord who occupies the position of Lord President of the Council, but I agree with the most reverend Primate and the noble Viscount who has just sat down that our position is very unsatisfactory, and it will become impossible when the Education Bill comes up unless we are to have a representative of the Board of Education on the Front Bench opposite who can really go into the questions and answer points raised in debate. Until a short time ago the noble Earl who is now Secretary of State for the Colonies was Lord President of the Council, and I doubt if any one in your Lordships' House knew so much of Mr. Birrell's Bill as he did. Consequently I remember the noble Earl was congratulated on the manner in which he conducted the debates on that measure, and I venture to think that if another Bill of great importance is to come to this House, whoever represents the Board of Education on the Front Ministerial Bench should be, I will not say as conversant with the matter as the noble Earl, for I think that would be almost impossible, but at any rate thoroughly acquainted with the details of that measure.

The substance of the answer which has been given to-day in no way meets the case made out by Lord Halifax. If there is to be a combination between the local education authority and the Board of Education to tyrannise over voluntary schools, then indeed the greatest injustice possible can be anticipated by supporters of denominational schools. We have had put before us to-day a variety of reasons why the Board of Education should not have adopted the line they have, and I cannot think we have had one clearly-put argument as to the reasons why they have taken that course. I should like to ask whether the cost of this school, which is not wanted by the ratepayers and is objected to by the inhabitants, will come out of the £100,000 grant or out of the rates. In any case, the ratepayers of East Hardwick will be burdened with a rate which they do not desire. In

1905 the managers advised the Board of Education that they proposed to put the school in a satisfactory condition. The Board's architect thoroughly approved of their proposals, and they were approved by the architect representing the local education authority. Therefore, I would ask on what grounds the Board of Education declined to permit the managers either to improve the school or to build a new school. With regard to the playground, in all probability I was myself responsible for the answer that was sent, to the effect that no claim could be made upon the managers to provide a playground. But, in spite of that, so anxious were the East Hardwick managers to meet any requirements, that they were prepared to provide a playground adequate for the purpose.

I come back to the main question. Why was the desire of the ratepayers not to have a new school entirely overridden by the Board of Education? Surely there must be some reason behind all this. It seems to me that the Board of Education have not acted in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 1902 in dealing with this case; and on this point I would ask the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack whether the Board has not been guilty of an illegality in infringing the provisions of Section 9, which enacts that—

> "The Board of Education, in deciding an appeal as to the provision of a new school, shall have regard, first, to the interests of secular education."

Is the secular education insufficient or badly administered in this East Hardwick school? Surely not, or the school would not be receiving the Government grant.

> "Secondly, to the wishes of the parents sa to the education of their children"—

My noble friend has told us that meetings of the inhabitants and ratepayers have been held, and that they almost unanimously object to the proposal to build a council school. In that matter the action of the Board of Education is contrary to the Act. The section continues that the Board of Education shall have regard—

> "thirdly, to the economy of the rates."

I do not think that any Member of the Front Bench opposite will assert for a moment that they are considering the economy of the rates. Therefore, I should like to ask the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack whether by their action the Board of Education are not infringing the provisions of the Act of 1902.

I ask, on what grounds did the Board of Education refuse the legal inquiry for which the managers had every right to ask? Surely that is contrary to the spirit and desire of the Act. After all, the Board of Education is not a political body. It should decide impartially in the interest of good education, and therefore I again ask on what ground was an inquiry refused. I can only think that the action of the Board of Education, in combination with the West Riding Education Authority, is to squeeze out denominational schools. If that is the case, it is a most unfair way in which to deal with political opponents. It is nothing more nor less than introducing politics into education. I hope, before the conclusion of the debate, we shall have some further explanation from His Majesty's Government.

*The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (The Earl of Crewe): My Lords, this is a case which involves the administrative discretion of the head of a Department. It is one of those cases which, when I had to deal with them, always made me wish that a reform which, for all I know, may be some day proposed, had already been adopted—namely, that Ministers were permitted to deal with Departmental cases in either House of Parliament. These are, as I have said, purely cases of personal discretion in administration, and it is very difficult for those who are not immediately concerned in the business of an office to deal fully and adequately with questions arising out of its administration.

I think that the most rev. Primate and subsequent speakers were somewhat hard on my noble friend behind me, the Lord President of the Council. These are among the most difficult class of questions to understand and follow of any that I know. My noble friend has not long held his present office, and I think it is not surprising that he has not yet mastered all the intricacies of administration which arise under the Education Act of 1902. If I had been confronted with a similar question when I had been only the same time in that office I should have found myself obliged to give what my noble friend frankly admitted was a somewhat formal answer instead of a reasoned argument of the whole case.

This, as I say, is a question of administrative discretion. This school is over 200 years old. That is, no doubt, an interesting fact, and a fact which, of itself, arouses some sympathy with the continuance of the school; but it is not a fact which, as such, can be said to appeal to the Board of Education. The Board of Education has to deal with schools as they are, and it is not disputed that for some considerable time this small village school was in certain respects behind the general modern standard of comfort for the children who attended it. For instance, for a long time there was no playground, and the managers argued, if I remember rightly, with some obstinacy against the idea of providing one at all. That is a point on which the Board of Education, though willing to do all they could, were obliged to put their foot down. Then the cloakroom and lavatory accommodation was for a considerable time inadequate, and it was not until something like four years after the attention of the managers had originally been called to that fact that plans were submitted and a change made.

The question, as I have said, is one of the administrative discretion of the Minister. The noble Marquess opposite has correctly pointed out three grounds on which the head of the Board of Education has to act under Section 9 of the Act of 1902 in deciding whether or not a new school is necessary. Those are, as we know, the interests of secular education, the wishes of the parents, and the burden of the rates. But, my Lords, the Minister for Education of the day can, as I have often pointed out from this Table, lay any degree of stress upon any one of those considerations to the exclusion of the other two. We have often held that the task imposed upon any head of the Board of Education to decide between incompatible and very often opposing things was a really impossible task to perform. The result is that the matter is left to the discretion of the Minister of the day, and therefore when the County Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire applied to have a council school erected, my right hon. friend, Mr. McKenna, had to make that decision.

I think it is evident from, I am afraid, the little time I have been able to give to the subject, that it was a very nicely balanced case, and I cannot say what my own decision would have been had I been President of the Board of Education at the time. I should have been in considerable doubt on the subject, but my right hon. friend, in the exercise of his discretion, did decide—primarily, I take it, on the ground that even if the proposed repairs and alterations were made to the school it would be essentially un unsatisfactory school—in favour of the West Riding County Council. As I have said before at this Table, I hold no brief for the West Riding County Council in these matters of education, though I was once a member of that body in the happy time when complaints of this particular order did not arise; and I think I have said on former cases that the particular pressure which the West Riding County Council has occasionally thought fit to exercise upon voluntary schools was not one which I was in any way concerned to defend. As regards the Wentbridge case, I know nothing of the particular circumstances. Still less do I know anything of the illustrative case presented by Lord Ribblesdale, which did not bear directly upon this case but merely formed part of a general indictment against the West Riding County Council as a local education authority.

LORD RIBBLESDALE: It bears directly on one of Lord Halifax's main points, that of the rates.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I must again point out to my noble friend that this is a matter entirely in the discretion of the Minister of the day. That may be an unfortunate fact, but he gives such weight as he chooses, in relative proportion, to the three considerations referred to. And when the noble Marquess opposite attempts to point out that the interests of secular education are satisfied by the fact that the school had been receiving the grant, I would point out that this is not the case. The interests of secular education must mean the general efficiency of the school, and would also, of course, include the condition of the school from sanitary and other points of view. Then the most rev. Primate said that my noble friend the Lord President had stated that there was no alternative to the action of the Board of Education. This, I think, was a misapprehension on the part of the most rev. Primate. Of course there is that discretion which I have already described. What my noble friend stated was this, that after the council school had been declared necessary no offer to build a new school had been considered. That, I think, was the only point on which that particular question arose.

The noble Marquess who has just sat down asked whether any part of the £100,000 grant would be devoted to the erection of this school. I understand not. This case is taken entirely on its merits as the provision of a council school in the ordinary manner, and therefore the whole sum will be provided out of the rates in the proportion with which the noble Marquess is, of course, familiar. Cases of this kind are, no doubt, usefully debated in your Lordships' House, but we come perpetually back to the point that the Minister of the day takes his own view as to how he will exercise his discretion. It is quite right, no doubt, that those who object to that exercise of discretion should comment upon it where they think the Minister has acted wrongly, but as the Act of Parliament stands the absolute discretion does rest with the Department, and it is clearly impossible to go behind what Mr. McKenna did in this instance.

*Viscount HALIFAX: My Lords, I would ask the noble Earl whether it is not possible for some steps to be taken to prevent the compulsory powers applied for being granted to the local education authority to provide a site. The Bill for compulsory powers has been referred to the Examiners, and it will very shortly, I suppose, come before this House, when I presume it will be competent for any Member of your Lordships' House to move that the Bill be not agreed to. As to the playground, I should like to read to your Lordships an extract from the surveyor's report which was sent to the local education authority on this question. He first of all said, in regard to the suggested site—

> "This site is available, and if the vicar will hand it over to the trustees it will provide the site necessary for the purpose."

That site for the playground was acquired for the school, and therefore there is no question that the playground could have been provided. The surveyor added—

> "In the circumstances the question of adding to the rates by the provision of a provided school should not be brought forward until all other means of making the necessary playground provision had been exhausted."

This was the report of the surveyor of the local education authority itself. The necessary site was forthcoming, but, nevertheless, the local authority and the Board of Education insisted upon a provided school.

Lord STANLEY of ALDERLEY: My Lords, I feel that this is a very difficult matter to discuss without a fuller statement of the facts on both sides. The facts as presented by the noble Viscount opposite are, no doubt, very strong in his favour, and I should be inclined, if those facts were incapable of being refuted, to give him a *rule nisi*. But there are two defendants in this case—the Board of Education and the West Riding Education Authority. I should be perfectly willing to say, on the facts as presented to-day, that the local education authority, while it might have been perfectly right in the earlier days in pressing for a suitable school, used its powers oppressively at the latter part of the negotiations. We have not, however, a leading member of the West Riding County Council here to tell us from his own knowledge what passed, and therefore I do not like to condemn one party to a dispute when that party has not been properly heard.

But may I point out to the noble Viscount a course which he and his friends might properly take whereby this question would be fought out in the best possible way? A Provisional Order is at this moment being promoted to acquire the proposed site by compulsion. That Provisional Order takes the course of an ordinary private Bill. The owner of the site proposed to be taken can oppose, and he can give any evidence he pleases to satisfy the Private Bill Committee that it is not a proper case for the exercise of compulsory powers. I understand that the Board of Education has not yet removed this voluntary school from the list of public elementary schools. Therefore it is quite competent for the owner of the proposed site to show to the Committee that this school is at the moment recognised, that the managers are ready and willing to do everything, to the extent of actually building a new school, and that therefore there is no occasion for Parliament to grant powers for the purchase of a site on which to erect a council school. If that were done both sides would be heard before an impartial tribunal. It cannot be satisfactory to debate a question where we have only the case, temperately put, I admit, of one side.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the noble Earl who leads the House apologised for the somewhat meagre explanation afforded by his colleague on the ground that the Lord President is a novice in his present Department. The Leader of the House cannot plead that he is a novice in regard to matters of education; indeed, he has, on the contrary, always been regarded by us as a high authority upon the subject. Therefore, when we find his explanation not more satisfactory than that of the Lord President, we may, I think, conclude that the Government case is not a very strong one. Neither of the two noble Lords can be surprised if we are dissatisfied with their explanations; and it is to be observed that both of them carefully avoided accepting an ounce of responsibility for the action of the Board of Education. The Secretary of State for the Colonies explained to us that this was a question involving the administration of a Department, and that the matter lay entirely within the personal discretion of the head of that Department. I do not know whether we are to expect in this House that whenever an awkward question is put to the Front Bench opposite we are to be told, if the head of the Department does not happen to sit on that Front Bench, that the matter is one concerning the personal discretion of the Minister at the head of the Department.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: May I explain that the peculiar character of the discretion which rests with the Minister for Education under the Act of 1902 is what made me draw attention to the point in this particular instance. I should by no means say that of every administrative act of every Minister.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: I accept my noble friend's interpretation of the matter; but if he tells us that the question is one concerning the administration of the Department, and that the administration rests with the head of the Department, then I say that it is the recent administration of the Education Department that fills us with apprehension. This is not a solitary case in which the administration of the Board of Education had been of an aggressive, and, I would almost venture to say, of a vindictive character.

I will not recapitulate the history of this case at length, but just let us fix our attention on the salient facts. Here is a small school in an out-of-the-way part of the country, but this episode has thrown a flood of light upon the educational policy of His Majesty's Government. This little school has been for 250 years a Church of England school; it is big enough, is admitted to be big enough, to meet the wants of the decreasing population. It requires only one or two alterations to bring it up to modern requirements, and it is quite clear to any reasonable mind that there is no difficulty in providing those modern alterations. The matter was investigated again and again; everyone was consulted, the trustees, the West Riding Education Committee, the Charity Commissioners, the Board of Education, and all went perfectly well until the month of March, 1907. Even the two architects sent down by the local education committee and the Board of Education were satisfied with the alterations that were proposed. Then what we want to know is why, in the spring of 1907, there was a sudden change of front, and why at that particular moment this new, and, I venture to say, aggressive policy was set in force? What has happened? A new council school is to be built to accommodate sixty children, the present attendance being thirty, and at a cost of £1,000. The ratepayers naturally objected, but the Board of Education refused an inquiry.

Lord TWEEDMOUTH: Can the noble Marquess tell us what was the foundation of the original school—who built it, and who was responsible for it?

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: I am informed that it has been a Church of England school for over 200 years. Is that challenged?

Lord TWEEDMOUTH: I do not know.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: Then why did the noble Lord interrupt me? I am assured by my noble friend behind me that there is no doubt whatever on the point.

Viscount HALIFAX: It was a non-provided school.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: Even assuming that the alterations originally proposed and acquiesced in by everybody, including the Board of Education, are insufficient, and that something more must be done, we can fall back on the generous offer made by a lady to build a new voluntary school at her own expense. Why is that offer brushed on one side? Why are the ratepayers to be compelled to find the money? In spite of the local indignation aroused at this high-handed conduct, inquiry is refused. The noble Marquess behind me appealed to the noble and learned Lord (Lord Loreburn) who was sitting upon the Woolsack at the time the noble Marquess was speaking for an opinion as to the legality of the action of the Board of Education. I should be perfectly ready to accept one from my noble and learned friend who is sitting upon the Woolsack at this moment (The Earl of Halsbury). The clause in question runs—

> "The Board of Education shall, without unnecessary delay, determine, in case of dispute, whether a school is necessary or not, and in so determining, and also in deciding upon any appeal as to the provision of a new school, shall have regard to the interests of secular education, to the wishes of the parents as to the education of their children, and to the economy of the rates."

We want to know why an investigation upon those lines was peremptorily refused by the President of the Board of Education. To my mind this case is of very peculiar importance, because it seems to me to throw a good deal of light upon the sincerity of the professions of Ministers who tell us that they are in favour of a reasonable compromise on the education question. Within the last few hours a colleague of the noble Lord opposite, speaking in another place, said that His Majesty's Government had an earnest desire to obtain a lasting settlement of this controversy. He said that the great majority of the public were anxious for peace, and he dwelt upon the prevalence of a spirit of practicability and common sense. How far has the action of the Board of Education in the present case been animated by a desire for compromise or by a spirit of practicability or common sense? I venture to say that unless the administration of the Board of Education shows a greater amount of consideration and a less aggressive tendency, the chance of a reasonable settlement of this most difficult of all questions will be enormously decreased.

INDIAN TRADERS IN NATAL.

Lord AMPTHILL rose to call attention to the statement concerning the Municipal Corporations Act and the Dealers' Licences Act of the Colony of Natal made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies on the 6th instant, and to move for Papers. The noble Lord said: My Lords, about a fortnight ago I asked the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he could lay on the Table of the House any correspondence concerning the two Acts of the

Colony of Natal which are named in my Motion. In doing so I refrained from comment for two reasons. The first was that the noble Earl had only just succeeded to his high office, and the second was that I thought it was desirable, if possible, that important questions of this kind should be discussed in the full light of official knowledge. The noble Earl declared his inability to present any Papers, saying that there were no Papers to give.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I said the Papers were incomplete.

*LORD AMPTHILL. Anyhow, there were no further Papers to present. But the noble Earl went out of his way to make a statement concerning the situation which has arisen in Natal on account of those two Acts. That statement added nothing to the knowledge of the subject which is possessed by the general public, but it omitted a good deal. I am, therefore, raising the question again today in the hope of persuading the noble Earl to repair those omissions, and particularly to give us some indication of his policy. We cannot, in view of past experience, rest content to leave a matter of this kind to the unquestioned discretion of the Colonial Office. We should fear that the result would be very much what it was in a recent case, on which I need not at this moment enlarge. But perhaps I may say that we all hope the noble Earl will initiate a policy at the Colonial Office rather different from that which has been pursued during the past two years, and he will, I am sure, understand that if I make any criticisms of the policy of His Majesty's Government they are not directed at him personally, although, of course, they are directed at the Government of which he is a Member.

The noble Earl said that there had been no correspondence since September, 1907, when his predecessor had addressed a letter to the Natal Government, which at that moment still remained unanswered. What I have to ask, then, in the first instance, is, why there has been no further correspondence. There has been plenty of occasions for further correspondence, and I confess I was dismayed at hearing that this had not been the view of the Colonial Office. If the Imperial Government have any duty at all towards His Majesty's subjects, wherever they may be under the British flag, if they have any responsibility for the unity and harmony of the Empire, there has been ample and frequent occasion for correspondence with the Government of Natal. The Dealers' Licences Act, which was passed in the year 1897, has placed the Indian trader in Natal completely at the mercy of his European competitors. It is not clear that this measure was originally intended as an anti-Asiatic measure, although it is being at present administered as such. Licensing boards composed solely of Europeans, and those Europeans often the actual trade rivals of the Indians, have unprecedented powers of granting or refusing trade licences or renewals. But, what is most serious of all, there is no appeal from their decisions to the Courts of the Colony.

Now, these boards have of late been using their powers in a manner which can only be described as most unjust and high-handed. They have been refusing licences, or rather the renewal of licences, on the flimsiest of pretexts. Some of the Indians who have just been deprived of their livelihood are well-known shopkeepers and tradesmen who have been resident in the Colony for as long as twenty or thirty years, and had made the Colony their home. There can be no doubt whatever that all this is part of a deliberate policy to drive the Indian trader out of the Colony, and to reduce the Indian coolie to a condition which would be described by the supporters of His Majesty's Government as one of slavery. Apart from the injustice and inhumanity of this policy, it is both short-sighted and ungrateful. It is short-sighted because the Colony cannot do without Indian labour, and cannot have Indian labour unless the Indian trader remains there. It is ungrateful because the Indians—it is not too much to say it—have actually made the Colony of Natal. Natal would have been bankrupt years ago if it had not been for the presence of our Indian fellow subjects. Natal would be bankrupt to-morrow if you removed all the Indians from the Colony.

We may leave it to the Colonists themselves to consider the improvidence of the step so far as it is a matter that concerns their own interests; but the ingratitude concerns us, inasmuch as it amounts to a breach of an Imperial compact, and is, therefore, a serious danger to the Empire as a whole. The Indians came to Natal rather more than forty years ago by invitation. They came in response to an invitation when the Colony was in dire necessity, and their advent saved the Colony from impending ruin. These Indians made the Colony their home, relying on the good faith, not only of the Imperial Government, but also of the Colonial Government. Since they have been there they have played an indispensable part in the development of the Colony. The actual position is that there is an Indian population of 100,000, slightly in excess of the white population. Of these 40,000 are indentured labourers, while the remainder are free Indians, of whom a great proportion are women and children.

Before proceeding, I should like once more to explain my attitude on this question generally, in order that there may be no misunderstanding. I do not deny, and never have denied, the right of any Colony to limit or restrict the immigration, either of Indians or of any other people, as that is a matter concerning their own property, and the right is analogous to the rights which we exercise in our own country, both as regards public and personal property. But what I do say is that if it is necessary on economic grounds, on commercial grounds, to restrict the immigration of any section of His Majesty's subjects, the measures to that end should be so framed that there could be no suggestion or suspicion that such exclusion as might be necessary was made on grounds of colour or race prejudice. The exclusion must be on economic or proprietary grounds, and on those alone.

I return to the Dealers' Licences Act, and I should like to say that the unfairness of the Act has been recognised by many prominent citizens of Natal; and some, indeed, have protested in very strong language their indignation at the manner in which it was being administered.

Lord Ampthill.

I will not trouble your Lordships with numerous quotations. A single one will suffice. A former Attorney-General of the Colony, M. Labistour said

> "That town councillors were called upon to perform a dirty work, in that they were expected to tacitly refuse licences merely on the ground of colour,"

and he suggested that if the legislature intended such work to be done it ought to legislate in that direction and not leave the town councils to do it.

That is a fair sample of the opinions which have been expressed by other prominent Colonists.

Now I come to the other Act—the Municipal Corporations Act. Up to 1896 free Indians in the Colony occupied a position of equality with the white Colonists, but in that year they were deprived of the political franchise. This Municipal Corporations Act proposes to deprive them of the municipal franchise The reasons for this are not apparent. There is no analogy with the circumstances which were said to disqualify Indians for the political franchise—namely, that representative government did not exist in India. Municipal institutions do exist in India, and Indians have proved that they are well fitted to make good use of them. The Indians in Natal have done absolutely nothing to justify this proposed deprivation, and it is difficult to see what reason there can be for it unless it is to humiliate them and to render their position intolerable.

His Majesty's Government have not, so far as we are aware, protested against this law, but they have, so the noble Earl told us a fortnight ago, reserved assent to it in order to bargain for an appeal to the Supreme Court under the Dealers' Licences Act. The next question I have to ask is, Why have His Majesty's Government not protested against this proposed municipal disfranchisement? The letter suggesting this bargain in relation to the Licences Act was sent in September, 1907, and since then it appears that no further action has been taken. But meanwhile the persecution of Indians under the Licences Act has been going on apace. Why have His Majesty's Government not protested? I have seen the inner life of the Colonial Office, and I know what has been done, and can be done, under similar circumstances. Mr. Chamberlain knew how to protest in precisely similar circumstances, and he did protest.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: He passed this Act.

*LORD AMPTHILL: I will take that point now. Mr. Chamberlain allowed the Act to pass because it was not apparent at the time, nor was it, I believe, the intention, that the Act should be an anti-Asiatic Act, but when he saw how it was being administered he protested. His protest met with a respectful hearing and a corresponding result; and what I want to know is why His Majesty's Government have not done the same now that this high-handed action has recommenced?

It is idle to say that these are domestic concerns of the Colony with which we may not interfere. The fact that the South African Colonies are not alone concerned is amply demonstrated by the feeling in India on this subject. His Majesty's Government, above all, cannot offer that excuse after their determined and uncompromising interference in the matter of Chinese labour. His Majesty's Government interfered to save the Chinese, who are not our fellow subjects, from ill-treatment, for so they declared it to be. By no possible quibble can they deny that the right, the power, and the duty to protect Indians who are our fellow-subjects is far greater. I will tell His Majesty's Government why they have not done anything, and why they have not been able to do anything. It is because you are not trusted by the Colonies and because you are not on friendly terms with the Colonies. At the instigation of a meddling section of your supporters, you have interfered with these Colonies and treated them unfairly in matters which are really not of Imperial concern. That is why you cannot get a hearing now when really Imperial concerns are at stake. You have interfered in the administration of justice and the preservation of order, which are purely local concerns. I need only instance your interference in the case of the murder of the police inspector in 1906, in the matter of the administration of martial law, and at the present time in the case of Dinizulu. It is on account of that interference that the Colonies are flouting you now in this matter, and that they will not listen to any protests which you may make. And what is the attitude of the Dutch, whom you believe you have made your friends by the concessions you have given to them? It is only in human nature that they should be glad to see a dispute between British colonists and the Home Government, and that they should tacitly encourage it. That is what is going on now.

This inaction of His Majesty's Government has encouraged the Transvaal within the last few months to follow suit to Natal. The new Gold Law and the draft Local Government Bill, of which we have seen accounts in the Press, are attempts to restore a tyranny even worse than that which existed in the Kruger *regime*. What I have to ask is, What are His Majesty's Government going to do now? That is what we want to know, and we should like to see the cards on the table. We shall be told again, I suppose, that nothing can be said because it is a matter of "diplomacy." We know that diplomacy, and we want no more of it. We have learnt that what is called diplomacy, so far as the administration of Colonial affairs are concerned, means, first of all, timid protest, then long inaction, and, finally, ill-graced acquiescence. It is the diplomacy which banged, barred, and bolted the door against Colonies that favoured a policy distasteful to the Radical Party, but which licked the boots of the Colony which was ready to play the Radical Party game. It is the diplomacy which interfered recklessly to stop Chinese slavery, but which dares not raise a finger to prevent Indian slavery; which grovels before an Afrikander Ministry, but bullies a British Ministry in South Africa; which pledged five millions of British money to redeem Radical electioneering promises, but which will not give preference on a single peppercorn to promote Imperial unity. It is the diplomacy which has dragged down Imperial affairs, so far as the Colonies are concerned, into the mire of party politics. We want no more of that diplomacy, and we hope that the noble Earl, who has now so appropriately been placed in the high office of Secretary of State for the Colonies, will return to the old policy of that Department—the policy of candid and fearless assertion of the rights of British subjects and of the duty of the Imperial Government, a policy which is better calculated than this recent diplomacy to inspire the confidence of our kith and kin beyond the seas, and to win the co-operation of the joint inheritors of our great traditions of freedom and justice.

Moved, for Papers.—(*Lord Ampthill.*)

*The Earl of CREWE: My Lords, I anticipated a somewhat simple question from the noble Lord, but in this House one sometimes enjoys agreeable surprises. We have heard a glowing oration. If I were in the noble Lord's place I should be half disposed to ask the gentlemen in the Press Gallery not to report this speech, in order that he might have the advantage of delivering it somewhere on a public platform, to which, I think, it would be more suited than to the peaceful atmosphere of your Lordships' House.

I really have very little to add to what I said in reply to the noble Lord, whose deep and absolutely honest interest in this matter I most cordially recognise, when he put a similar question to me the other day. There are two so-called Acts concerned in this matter. One is the Dealers' Licences Act, which is in force, and the other is the Municipal Corporations Act, which is not in force; and really the only complaint I have to make of the noble Lord is that he mixed those measures so completely together that he would have almost led anybody not acquainted with the circumstances to imagine that both of those Acts were at this moment the law of Natal. The Licences Act is, but the Municipal Corporations Act is not. It is a reserved Bill.

*Lord AMPTHILL: I said clearly that His Majesty's Government had reserved it in order to make a bargain.

*The Earl of CREWE: Yes, but at the same time the noble Lord denounced us for allowing Indians to be deprived of their vote when, as a matter of fact, they have not been deprived of their vote. It is true that when the Prime Minister of Natal was here my noble friend, Lord Elgin, did propose what the noble Lord calls a bargain, and the reason for doing so was this, that it might undoubtedly be somewhat of a grievance to the Indian to lose his municipal vote, but the advantage of getting an appeal as to the Dealers' Licences Act would have been, from our point of view, and, as we believe, from the point of view of the Indian settlers in Natal, so infinitely greater that if that bargain could be made it would be an extremely good bargain. The Municipal Corporations Act is, as we have said, not the law of the land. It is a reserved Bill; nothing whatever has happened under it, and therefore the Indian still has his municipal vote. In September last, as has been stated, my predecessor, Lord Elgin, wrote the despatch to which the noble Lord has alluded. That despatch has not, so far, been answered, and the effect of its not being answered is that nothing has happened and that the law remains exactly as it has been since 1897, when the Dealers' Licences Act was passed. So that what the noble Lord asks us to do is not, I take it, to deal with the Municipal Corporations Act, which for all we know, is dropped—at any rate, it does not, so far as we are concerned, exist—but to make an entirely fresh and independent attack upon the Dealers' Licences Act with a view of getting it altered. My noble friend Lord Elgin thought that what the noble Lord calls a bargain was the better way of getting to work, and if that bargain could be carried out I should certainly proceed with the policy of my noble friend. The noble Lord said that when the Dealers' Licences Act was passed in the year 1907, it was not imagined that it was going to apply to Asiatics. That is to me a most astounding statement.

*Lord AMPTHILL: I did not say that. What I said was that it was not supposed to be by intention an anti-Asiatic Act.

*The Earl of CREWE: I do not exactly know what the noble Lord means by that.

*LORD AMPTHILL: It is very simple. An anti-Asiatic Act is an Act intended to make the position of Asiatics less bearable, less tolerable—an Act intended to drive them out of the country.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: All Acts of Parliament depend to some extent on the method in which they are administered, and if an Act is passed which in future years, when feeling becomes more pronounced, enables a Colony to act in a more pronounced way, then those who gave their consent to that Act are responsible. That Act, as the noble Lord must surely know, was explicitly framed so as to include Asiatics. The wording of Section 22 is exceedingly ingenious, and includes all Asiatics without naming them; and Asiatics have, as a matter of fact, been under it ever since.

I do not propose to deal with that part of the noble Lord's speech in which he said that we were regarded in an unfriendly manner by the Colony. I have no reason to believe that that is so as regards the Colonial Office, and, indeed, I repudiate the suggestion. There is only one point of his speech in that connection to which I would allude. When the noble Lord accuses us of having lost the affections of some of the Colonies by having shown an interest in native questions, he should not forget, among all his very natural interest in, and devotion to, the cause of Indians, that there are coloured men of other races who are also the subjects of His Majesty the King, and in considering the interests of one, as I hope we shall, we certainly do not intend to sacrifice the interests of the other.

As to the reason why no further correspondence has taken place, there was no real advantage in pressing for an answer to Lord Elgin's dispatch of September last until the Natal Parliament met. The Natal Parliament has not sat for six months. It is, I believe, to meet next month, and we shall then be in a very much better position to give a full reply to the noble Lord's question than we are at the present moment. I have no hostility whatever to the idea of publishing Papers on the subject. Our reason for not agreeing to do so at once was, as I stated at the time, that the Papers, if published now, would be incomplete; but I hope that before the end of the session it may be possible to lay Papers, and if the noble Lord will withdraw his Motion I will let him know if and when it may be suitable to lay further Papers on the subject.

*VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: My Lords, as I happen to know something about the Colony of Natal, I should like to trouble your Lordships with a few observations on this question. I think it is not at all surprising that the noble Lord behind me, with his great experience and knowledge of India and his natural interest in the subjects of the King in that part of the world, should have brought this question before your Lordships, but I do not think he made quite sufficient allowance for the extreme difficulty of the Colonial Office in dealing with such questions as this in Natal. They have to consider, not only the rights and claims of our Indian fellow subjects, but also the feelings and the interests of the white population in the Colony.

It is very easy for us to talk of the rights of our Indian fellow subjects in a British Colony, but your Lordships must remember that it is a British Colony and not an Indian Colony. I cannot myself see that because Indians are our fellow subjects therefore they have the right to the position of what is, after all, the dominant race in the British Empire, and to be placed on the same footing in Natal as the British race or the Dutch race. But I think they have a claim—a very strong claim—to be treated with fairness and justice, having regard to the rights which they have acquired at the present time in that Colony. It must be remembered that the Indian population in Natal outnumber the white population, and that the white population have to deal, in addition, with an enormously preponderating number of South African native races. It is an extremely difficult position, and a position which is increasing in difficulty rather rapidly.

I myself believe that the time ought to come very soon when the immigration of Indians into Natal—the indentured coolie immigration—should, for the sake of everybody concerned, be brought to an end. I think it has become something very like a danger to the future of Natal. But, however that may be, I entirely admit that any obligation entered into with the Indians already there ought strictly and rigidly to be observed. We must remember the feelings—you may call them prejudices if you like—of the Natal colonist in this matter. From my own experience, I know that the feeling of the white population in Natal, generally, might almost be called bitter against the competition to which they are subjected from the very virtues of the Indian trader. The Indian is an abstemious and frugal person, he lives upon very little, he is always sober, he is content with small gains, and he is fitted in every way to be a trader; and the white trader in Natal, as in other parts of South Africa, finds it almost impossible to compete with him successfully. So naturally there exists a feeling in Natal that they would desire, if they could, to limit the number of Indians who are allowed to trade.

The Colonial Office cannot ignore the fact of that feeling, and they must consider it in their dealings with a self-governing Colony. My knowledge of South Africa leads me to say that the less the Colonial Office interfere in any matter with the self-governing Colonies of South Africa, the better for this country, the better for South Africa, and the better for the Empire as a whole. There is the white Natal side of this question to be considered as well as the Indian side. The Colonial Office have to judge between them, and they should endeavour to do so with fairness and justice.

*LORD AMPTHILL: I, of course, readily accept the noble Lord's suggestion that he should let me know when it is convenient to present Papers, but I would like to point out that I did not receive any answer to my question as to why there has been no further correspondence on the subject of this high-handed administration of the law and no protests against the deprivation of the municipal franchise.

Viscount St. Aldwyn.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: The deprivation of the municipal franchise has not yet taken place.

*LORD AMPTHILL: I meant to say the proposed deprivation. The Act is under the consideration of His Majesty's Government. The noble Earl confined himself more or less to an argument as regards the nature of the Dealers' Licences Act—an argument to the effect that it ought not to have been passed by His Majesty's Government in 1897, and that they should have foreseen that it would be used as an anti-Asiatic Act. There was absolutely no reason to foresee that it would be applied for that purpose. It was an Act which, on the face of it, bore nothing more than the intention to restrain objectionable persons from trading, whether Europeans or Indians. It was only some time afterwards that it was used for the purpose of persecuting Indian traders.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: It did not apply to Europeans and to Indians alike. It applied to people who had not got the Parliamentary franchise at home.

*LORD AMPTHILL: At any rate it was not an anti-Asiatic Act, and protests on previous occasions have been successful.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

House adjourned at five minutes before Seven o'clock, till Tomorrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 19th May, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table, Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.,:—Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

Rhymney Railway Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Garw and Ogmore Gas (re-committed Bill; London County Council (General Powers) Bill; St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Divorce Bills.—Mr. Attorney-General, Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, Sir John Kennaway, Sir Joseph Leese, Mr. Solicitor General, Sir D. Brynmor Jones, Sir Edward Carson, Mr. G. Cave, and Mr. Solicitor-General for Ireland were nominated Members of the Select Committee on Divorce Bills.—(*Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*)

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 5) Bill; Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

Standing Orders—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee:—1. "That, in the case of the Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill, Petition for Additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to insert the additional Provision if the Committee on the Bill think fit." 2. "That, in the case of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways (No. 2), Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

Resolutions agreed to.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

Mr. Nussey reported from the Committee on Group F. of Private Bills; That the parties promoting the Pontypridd Water Bill [Lords] had stated that the evidence of Frank Treharne James, Solicitor, of Merthyr Tydfil, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Frank Treharne James do attend the said Committee To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

Ordered, That Frank Treharne James do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills To-morrow, at Two of the clock.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend The Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904, with respect to the tolls, rates, and charges at the piers and landing-places of the London County Council on the River Thames; and for other purposes," [Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [Lords.]

Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Lowestoft, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Abercrave; Ansley; Bolton; Buckley; Charity; Coxlodge; Elm; Glascote; Gosforth, Highley; Jane Pit Walker; Kinlet; Nuneaton; Peel; Phœnix; Pinxton; South Benwell; and Stockingford; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petitions against: From Aikton (seven); Burnfield; Bylands; Carlisle; Fringeland; Kirkbampton; Orton (two); Oulton; Westward; and Wigton (two); to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Stalybridge, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Shepton Mallet, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions for alteration: From Clun; Dumfries; Idle; and Wibsey; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aston Manor; Boreham Wood; Bristol; Brymbo; Burnishead Bridge; Cadeleigh; Carshalton; Cefnpant; Cheltenham; Cheriton Fitzpaine; Croydon (two); Cruwys Morchard; Cwmamman; Cynghardy; Dorchester; Dukestown; Dunkeld; Dyserth; Farbrase; Farnborough (seven); Ffynnon Groew; Glasbury; Halifax (three); Hayle; Hazelrigg; Henstridge; Holywell; Islington, N. (three); Ledbury; Liskeard; Llananno; Llandilo; Llanwda; Ludlow; Mortlake; New Barnet; Newport (Mon.) (two); Pembsey; Queensbury; Rhyl; Rhymney Bridge; St. Albans (two); Shipley (two); Shoscombe; Shrewsbury; Southsea; Stalybridge; Sunnybrow; Waddington; Walker-on-Tyne; Wallsend-on-Tyne; Willington Quay; Wincanton; Woodside; Wordsley; and Workington; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Annan; Avoch; Bishopbriggs; Cambusbarron; Coalburn; Cromarty; Crookham; Dumfries (two); Dumfries and Maxwelltown; Dunkeld; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Inverness; Patrick; Stewarton; and Wishaw; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition of the Regent's Canal and Dock Company against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

PUBLIC-HOUSES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Ayr, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petition from Street, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

RAILWAY RETURNS (PRELIMINARY STATEMENT).

Copy presented, of Return relating to the Railways of the United Kingdom for the year 1907 (Preliminary Statement) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE (FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND BRITISH POSSESSIONS).

Copy presented, of Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions for 1907. Volume I. [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ALIENS ACT, 1905.

Copy presented, of Second Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector under the Aliens Act (Part I.), and a Statement with regard to the Expulsion of Aliens (Part II.), in respect of the year 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT.

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 7th May; *Mr. Lloyd Morgan*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 147.]

NAVY (HYDROGRAPHER'S REPORT).

Copy presented, of Report on Admiralty Surveys for the year 1907 by the Hydrographer [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copy presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Report, Annual Series, No. 3996 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA LOANS [RAILWAY AND IRRIGATION WORKS].

Committee to consider of authorising the Secretary of State in Council of India to raise money in the United Kingdom, on the security of the Revenues of India, for the construction, extension, and equipment of Railways in India by State agency or through the agency of companies, and for the construction of Irrigation Works (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—(*Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*)

NAVAL CASUALTIES.

Return ordered, "specifying, for each year from 1901 to 1907, both inclusive, every Accident and Casualty occurring to any of His Majesty's ships and vessels during manœuvres or tactical exercises ordered by the Admiralty, under the following heads: date of casualty, station, ship, tonnage, complement, nature of casualty, number of lives lost."—(*Mr. Bowles.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Duty on Irish-Grown Tobacco.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is proposed to charge the same duty on Irish-grown tobacco as on foreign imported tobacco; and whether, in view of the fact that the Irish tobacco industry was stamped out by Act of Parliament, some remission of taxation on Irish grown tobacco can now be given to help a reviving industry, with a view to giving much sorely-needed employment in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The Resolution passed in Committee of Ways and Means on the 7th instant provides for an Excise Duty on Irish-grown tobacco unmanufactured, at the rate of 2s. 10d. the pound, as compared with 3s. the pound charged on imported tobacco. The difference of 2d. is intended to compensate the Irish producer for the cost entailed upon him by Excise restrictions. The Government could not agree to any differentiation in the rates of duty for the purpose of affording an artificial stimulus to the production of tobacco in Ireland.

Death Duties and the Transfer of Consols.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he would favourably consider the desirability of making arrangements by which, in case of the payment of death duties, it would be permissable for executors to transfer Consols which were held by the estate at the middle price at which they closed on the day of decease, or if a holiday the day previous, in satisfaction of such payment, as this would be a boon to those paying duties owing to the saving of realisation charges.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I do not think that it would be practicable to carry out my hon. friend's suggestion.

Irish Land Purchase Finance.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that a Committee of the Irish Parliamentary Party has been appointed to consider the finance of the Irish Land Purchase Act in connection with the Report of the Treasury Committee on this subject; and whether, under these circumstances, he will take care that no decision is come to by the Treasury on the matter until they have had an opportunity of considering the views of this Committee.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I shall be very glad to consider the views of the Committee to which the hon. Member refers, provided that they are submitted to me in time; but I would remind him that, though I am unable to fix a date, I regard the settlement of this question as urgent.

Rebate of Sugar Duty on Stock in Store.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that many jam manufacturers who make their jam from fresh fruit have already paid the full duty of 4s. 2d. per cwt. on their stocks of sugar; that their sugar is specially prepared and is not suitable for re-sale to the grocery trade, and must therefore remain in stock till the beginning of the strawberry season in July; that meanwhile the competing manufacturers who make their jam from pulped fruit are now able to buy their sugar with the 1s. 10d. duty and are advertising a reduction of 1s. per cwt. on all jam and marmalade; and that thus the manufacturers of fresh-fruit jam are placed at a disadvantage in the market with the makers of pulped-fruit jam; and whether under the circumstances he can see his way to grant a rebate on their stocks of sugar to these jam manufacturers.

MR. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to allow a rebate of duty upon stocks of foreign fruit and preserves in store at the prescribed date, in public warehouses as well as in private warehouses, upon which the Sugar Duty has been paid at the existing rate, in view of the effect of the reduction upon persons left with stocks.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this Question and that of the hon. Member for the Camlachie Division of Glasgow together. I have nothing to add to the statement which I made to the House on this subject on Thursday last.

Consols.

MR. ALEXANDER CROSS: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if there is any Return of the number of the holdings in Consols classified in respect of the amounts, and, if not, will he grant such Return; will he state what is the amount of Consols issued in bearer certificates and the dates of issue; and if he will consider what further facilities can be granted to small investors to encourage them to invest in Consols.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) No Return is published of the number of holdings in Consols. I will consider with the authorities of the Bank of England and the Bank of Ireland how far it would be practicable to prepare such a Return. I am informed that the amount of Consols held in the form of certificates to bearer on the 16th instant was £48,158,700; but I am unable to give the dates of issue of the respective certificates. Special facilities for investment in Consols are already afforded to depositors in the Savings Banks, on whose behalf Consols and other Government securities are now held in the investment account to the amount of, approximately, £23,000,000. The accumulative dividend account at the Bank of England, which was also instituted for the encouragement of small investors now comprises holdings amounting to £1,541,000. I shall be glad to consider any practicable scheme for further extending facilities in this direction.

Income Tax on Co-operative Stores.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he proposes to take such action in respect of levying of income-tax as will place individual traders in no inferior position to the Co-operative Stores.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I beg to refer my hon. friend to the Report of Lord Ritchie's Departmental Committee on Income-tax [Cd. 2575, of 1905], pages xxiii. to xxv. of which contain a full discussion of this subject, and the tenth appendix of which furnishes a very clear statement of the legal position, which is, I fear, subject to much misapprehension. I see no reason to dissent from the conclusions of the Committee.

Old Age Pensions.

MR. ROGERS (Wiltshire, Devizes): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what would be the net cost to the Old-Age Pension Fund if aged persons in receipt of outdoor relief were included in the scheme and a payment equivalent to the cost to the rates of their maintenance was paid by the guardians into the Pension Fund instead of being distributed to the persons concerned.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The total additional cost involved by giving pensions to persons over seventy who are in receipt of outdoor relief is estimated at £2,250,000 per annum. The value of the outdoor relief given to such persons is estimated at £1,470,000. Consequently the net additional cost to the Exchequer involved by my hon. friend's suggestion would be about £780,000. My hon. friend will bear in mind that these figures must be regarded as approximate estimates only, and not as precise calculations.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware of the fact that many aged persons will feel keenly their present exclusion from the Old-Age Pension Fund, and that in many cases sons and daughters would gladly provide their aged parents with a home provided they had the necessary sustenance for them; and if he will consider if something could be done for such persons without unduly pressing on national finance.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) If, as I infer, my hon. friend desires that the benefits of the present scheme should be extended to certain classes of persons under the age of seventy, I am afraid that the suggestion is not practicable.

Relief of Rates by Granting Old-Age Pensions.

MR. CATHCART WASON: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the fact that the extension of the Pension Fund to aged persons actually in receipt of Poor Law relief (approximately) would be £3,000,000, and that the local rates would be relieved to this extent, some deduction could, in the meantime, be made from national contributions to local rates in respect of such relief.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) As I informed my hon. friend in answer to a Question which he put to me in the House on Thursday last, the case of persons at present in receipt of Poor Law relief cannot be dealt with to any advantage before the Report of the Poor Law Commission has been received and considered.

Suggested Tax on High-Speed Motor Cars.

MR. CATHCART WASON: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the fact that the Legislature only passed The Motor Act, 1903, under the express provision that in no case should the speed exceed 20 miles an hour, and that that provision is entirely ignored by owners, drivers, and manufacturers, and cars are built to travel up to 100 miles an hour for use on the public roads, he will consider the advisability of taxing such cars at a prohibitive rate next year and give the firms who manufacture such cars ample notice of his intention.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The taxation of motor-cars is a subject to which I am giving careful attention; but I may remind my hon. friend that the policy of His Majesty's Government is not to impose taxes for purposes other than that of raising revenue, and this object is not conveniently attained by imposing taxes which are prohibitory.

Income-Tax Deduction on Charitable Endowment at Kilfenora.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the income-tax authorities have deducted a sum of 7s. from an annual charitable endowment fund of £7, which is devoted to the upkeep of Kilfenora Cathedral Church, County Clare; and whether he will consider the desirability of relieving such funds from the payment of income-tax.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am informed that there is no specific charitable endowment fund devoted to the upkeep of Kilfenora Cathedral Church. The payment in question was made by the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland out of the diocesan general fund of Killaloe and Kilfenora diocese on the requisition of that diocese. As there was nothing on the requisition to show that the payment was not remuneration the amount was departmentally assessed to income-tax under Schedule E. by the assessor of the representative body. If the diocesan authorities, when requiring similar payments to be made in future, will enter in their requisitions the object to which the money is to be applied, care will be taken by the assessor to make the payment in full without deduction of income-tax.

Compulsory Retirement in the Postal Telegraph Service.

SIR G. KEKEWICH (Exeter): To ask the Postmaster-General if he will state the number of officers of the postal telegraph service who were scheduled under The Superannuation (Post Office and War Office) Act, 1876, and are still in the service; and whether he has come to a decision as to whether he will give effect to the clause of the Act providing for compulsory retirement at sixty years of age.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The labour which would be involved in obtaining the information asked for in the first portion of the hon. Member's inquiry would be very great, and would be out of all proportion to any useful purpose it would serve; I regret that in the circumstances I do not feel justified in sanctioning it. As I explained on Friday last, in reply to the hon. Member for South-West Manchester, all pensionable officers, of whatever grade, whose conduct, capacity, or efficiency falls below a fair standard, are called upon to retire at sixty years of age; but retirement at sixty is not enforced in the case of officers whose conduct is good and who are certified by their superior officers to be thoroughly efficient.

Construction of Tugs for the Navy.

Mr. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty how many small tugs it is proposed to build for £30,651 (*see* pp. 230–31, Navy Estimates); and what are the dimensions of hull and machinery of these tugs, of what material they are to be constructed, and at what places they will be stationed.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) One such tug has been purchased and paid for. She is now named "Harlequin," and is stationed at Portsmouth. The vessel is built of steel, and is of about 800 i.h.p.; she is a paddle boat, 200 feet long by 24 feet broad. No decision has yet been reached with respect to the remaining tugs.

School Allowance for Territorial Soldiers.

Mr. GRETTON (Rutland): To ask the Postmaster-General if, in view of the fact that the War Office allowance for Territorial soldiers attending the schools of instruction has been reduced from 4s. to 2s. per diem, he will grant to Post Office employees who are Territorial soldiers, and who attend these schools, such proportion of their wages as will indemnify them from the loss they would otherwise sustain; and if he is aware that many private employers have already adopted this course.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) As I informed the hon. Member in reply to previous Question on the 30th ultimo, Post Office servants are allowed special leave without pay to attend military schools if the exigencies of the service admit. This leave is in addition to the special leave prescribed by the Treasury for attendance at the annual camp; and, while I sympathise with the efforts of Territorial soldiers to extend their knowledge of military matters, I do not think that I could justify a further charge on the Post Office Votes by reason of any alteration which may have been made in military pay or allowances during attendance at these schools. I may add that I am in communication with the Treasury as regards the conditions of special leave for camp purposes.

Foreign Import Duties on Indian Goods.

Mr. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is now able to lay upon the Table the information promised by the Secretary of State on 7th March, 1907, regarding import duties in certain foreign countries on Indian goods.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The Secretary of State has received from the Government of India a revised edition of the Return appended to their fiscal despatch of 22nd October, 1902, showing the approximate percentages of import duties levied in various countries on the principal articles exported from India. It will be laid upon the Table if the hon. Member will move for it. I would, however, remark that the Government of India have expressed a doubt as to the accuracy of the figures entered in it, though they have been compiled with all the care from the figures at their command.

Indian Trade Statistics.

Mr. REMNANT: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he will cause the statistical tables annexed to Cd. 1931 on India trade to be brought up to date.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) Of the five tables, the table showing the percentages of import duties levied in different countries on the principal articles exported from India has been revised for 1906–7 by the Government of India and will be laid if moved for. The statistics of imports and exports contained in the other four tables are given for the year 1906–1907 and four preceding years in the "Tables relating to the Trade of British India with British Possessions and foreign countries," presented in March last, Cd. 3969. No later figures are at present available.

Pay of Turret Gun Layers and Sight Setters.

MR. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will explain why different scales of pay are given to turret gun-layers and turret sight-setters in the Navy, Royal Marine Light Infantry, and Royal Marine Artillery, respectively, that is to say, for the Navy 1s. and 10d. per day, the Royal Marine Light Infantry 9d. and 7d. per day, and the Royal Marine Artillery 8d. and 6d. per day; and whether their Lordships can see their way clear to put both marine corps on the same basis as the Navy.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The terms used in this Question, namely, turret gun-layer and turret sight-setter, are moribund as far as the Royal Navy is concerned, being those in force prior to the changes introduced by Circular Letter No. 96 of 16th August, 1907, which followed the recommendations of the Ratings Committee. The two gunnery ratings which correspond, as far as the difference of system admits, are gun-layer first class and gun-layer second class, and these terms will be applied to Marines also. The rates of pay compare as follows:—

	Seamen.	Marines.	
		R.M.A.	R.M.L.I.
Old system:			
Turret gun-layer	1*s.*	8*d.*	8*d.*
Turret sight-setter... ...	10*d.*	6*d.*	6*d.*
Ratings Committee system:			
Gun-layer first class ...	8*d.*	8*d.*	8*d.*
Gun-layer second class ...	6*d.*	6*d.*	6*d.*

So far as pay for higher shooting rates is concerned, the rates for seamen, Royal Marine Artillery, and Royal Marine Light Infantry are now the same, and a gun-layer first class (corresponding to the old rating of turret gun-layer) will receive 8d. a day, whether in his substantive rank he is a seaman, a blue marine, or a red marine. Similarly, a gun-layer second class will receive 6d. a day. My hon. friend's figures for the gunnery pay of the Royal Marine Light Infantry are not quite correct, as they include the 1d. T.M. He has evidently taken the combined pay as shown in Appendix XV.A, as being for turret gun-layers and turret sight-setters alone, and has not noticed that it includes 1d. a day for T.M.

Dockyard Employment.

MR. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware of the dissatisfaction that has been created in dockyard towns by the delay in reopening the establishment; and, if so, whether he can give any information as to how soon His Majesty's Government will take steps to restore a system which has been held out as a special inducement to hired men when entering the royal dockyards.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The question is now engaging the earnest attention of His Majesty's Government, but, pending the decision on the whole case, the filling of vacancies in the establishment has been suspended.

Queen Anne's Bounty and the Endowment of Bishoprics.

Mr. ROBINSON (Brecknock): To ask the hon. Member for the Crewe Division, as representing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, whether the capital sum of £34,000 raised by royalties on minerals in virtue of leases granted by certain Queen Anne's Bounty farms, such farms being the endowment of the perpetual curacy of Capel Nantddu, County of Brecon, and now held by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, are being in whole or in part, or are intended to be, applied to provide a salary for the bishop suffragan of Swansea, who is now rector of Cantriff, the mother church of Capel Nantddu; whether such sum could be utilised for increasing the income of many of the poor beneficed clergy in the County of Brecon who have now much less than £200 a year, and to benefit whom Queen Anne's Bounty was first formed; and whether he is aware that Queen Anne's Bounty farms, lands, and money are by law intended for the use of the poor clergy or benefices, and not for the establishment of bishops, suffragan or otherwise.

(*Answered by Mr. Tomkinson.*) The fund mentioned in the Question has arisen from leases of minerals under lands formerly belonging to the perpetual curacy of Nantddu, and now to the united benefice of Cantreff with Nantddu, the perpetual curacy having been legally united to the rectory of Cantreff in 1867. The lands were bought with moneys allotted by Queen Anne's Bounty for the augmentation of Nantddu before its union with Cantreff, but from the date of such allotment the Bounty Board retained no interest present or reversionary in the property to the purchase of which the moneys had been appropriated. The fund is held by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners on behalf of the united benefice subject to the provisions of the Ecclesiastical Leasing Acts, under the authority of which the leases were granted. No part of the fund has been or could be applied for the endowment of a bishop suffragan or otherwise, but, the living being in private patronage, the private patrons have recently presented thereto the clergyman who since 1890 has been the Suffragan Bishop of Swansea, and he has been duly instituted. By a scheme of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, ratified by His Majesty in Council, so much of the fund as produces an income of £300 per annum has been diverted from the united benefice for the purpose of augmenting necessitous benefices, particularly in the district where the lands and minerals are situate, and further portions of the income may hereafter from time to time be appropriated to the like purposes under the same authority.

Scale of Pay in Winchester Post Office.

Mr. GUY BARING (Winchester): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state the units of work and Board of Trade index number which governed the classification of Winchester Post Office.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The classification of Winchester has not yet been decided. It is one of the offices in suspense.

Classification of Country Post Offices.

Mr. GUY BARING: To ask the Postmaster-General whether the classification of country post offices is completed; and from what date the classification takes effect.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The re-classification of country post offices is not yet completed. It will take effect from 1st January, 1908.

Bellshill School, Lanarkshire—Building Tender.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that a new school under the Department is being built at Bellshill, Lanarkshire, and that the school board of that district, instead of accepting the lowest offer from approved builders, have accepted one £300 above the lowest; whether his Department will sanction this extra payment; and, if so, will he explain to the House why it should be so sanctioned.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) Plans for a new school at Bellshill were approved and a loan for the erection of the buildings, in terms of Section 45 of the Education (Scotland) Act, 1872, was sanctioned by the Department in August last. The Department has no knowledge of the alleged fact that an offer other than the lowest was accepted by the board. The settling of contracts is a matter which is entirely within the discretion of the board, and it does not rest with the Department either to give or withhold sanction of the board's action.

Income-Tax Assessments.

MR. SCOTT (Ashton-under-Lyne): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Board of Inland Revenue, in order to arrive at the proper amount of assessment of profits due under Schedule D, are entitled to a statement of income and expenditure for three years in order to arrive at the average payable; whether, during the last year or two, the practice has come into vogue of surveyors of taxes asking for the production of balance sheets involving the disclosure of the financial position of traders in addition to the above; if he is aware that, when objection has been made to the production of these balance sheets, surveyors of taxes and special commissioners have admitted that they have no right to the production of the same, and that, notwithstanding this admission of no right on the part of surveyors and commissioners, they are refusing to allow for depreciation or wear and tear unless these balance sheets are produced, and that they are making supplementary assessments in order to drive income-tax payers to appeal and to produced balance sheets; that the before-mentioned practice varies in different parts of the country, and that in London, whilst balance sheets are frequently asked for by surveyors of taxes and special commissioners, they are not insisted upon when objection to their production is made, and yet in Lancashire and Yorkshire the balance sheets are insisted upon; and that this method of seeking and enforcing what admittedly the Inland Revenue are not entitled to is causing friction and indignation at this enforced disclosure of a man's financial position.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The district commissioners of taxes and the commissioners for special purposes, and not the Board of Inland Revenue, are the authorities in whom is vested the power of assessing and determining the liabilities of taxpayers under Schedule D, and who alone are entitled to statements of accounts. All returns under the Income-Tax Acts are subject to examination and objection by the surveyors of taxes prior to the consideration of the same by the Commissioners, and in order that they may be in a position to certify that they are satisfied with such returns, and thus obviate the possibility of appeals, it is their practice in certain cases to ask for accounts. It is only the commissioners who are empowered (by Section 120 of the Income-Tax Act of 1842) to demand the production of "all particulars required by them" for the purposes of the Income-Tax Acts, and this only for purposes of appeal. The special commissioners, I am informed, have not, as is suggested in the hon. Member's Question, admitted that they have no right to call for the production of balance sheets; and they consider that in many cases the information contained in balance sheets is essential in arriving at the correct liability. For protecting the revenue supplementary assessments are frequently necessary in the case of taxpayers claiming allowances, for, *e.g.*, wear and tear; and the Board are not aware of any cases in which surveyors have exceeded their powers in this connection.

Sale of the Estate of Mr. H. J. B. Clements, at Leitrim.

MR. F. MEEHAN (Leitrim, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have sanctioned the sale of the estate of Mr. H. J. B. Clements, situated at Manorhamilton, County Leitrim; whether an inspector had been sent on the estate; and, if so, whether the town of Manorhamilton and the lands adjoining will be included, to complete the sale of the entire estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The town of Manorhamilton and the lands adjoining it are not included in the estate of Mr. H. J. B. Clements for which purchase agreements have been lodged with the Estates Commissioners. The advances have not yet been sanctioned, and, having regard to the date (June, 1906) at which proceedings were instituted, the estate will not be inspected for a considerable time. The exclusion from the sale of the town and lands referred to may be the subject of inquiry when the inspection takes place.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Naval Casualties.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty how many casualties to ships in the Navy List were subsequently found to have been omitted from the Annual Return issued last year for the year 1906.

The FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): One causalty of importance was subsequently found to have been omitted from the Return in question. Every endeavour is made to give an accurate and comprehensive report for the Return, but it is found to be very difficult in practice to compile it satisfactorily in its present form. If the issue of the Return is to be continued in future, an amendment in the form of the Return will be asked for.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): Do I understand that only one casualty was reported? I have drawn attention to eight.

Mr. McKENNA: Only one of any importance. There were some of minor importance.

Mr. ASHLEY: How does the right hon. Gentleman define the word "importance" in this connection?

Mr. McKENNA: A case which would require serious repairs.

Mr. BELLAIRS: But if this House asks for a Return of casualties is not the Admiralty bound to give every case?

Mr. McKENNA: The Admiralty are anxious that the House should have the fullest information.

Mr. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): Are we to understand that where no damage is caused, it is not regarded as a casualty.

Mr. McKENNA: We do not include cases where no material damage is done. As I have said, one case of serious damage was omitted by inadvertence.

Elswick Works Contracts.

Mr. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can now say whether inquiries have been made respecting the wages paid by Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth, and Company to employees on H.M.S. "Lord Nelson" at Jarrow and H.M.S. "Invincible" at the Elswick works, Newcastle; and why the standard rate was departed from in the latter case.

Mr. McKENNA: Inquiry is being made, but the Admiralty is not yet in possession of all the facts of the case.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Can the rate of wages paid on the construction of battleships matter if the expenditure on the Navy is unproductive?

Mr. HUDSON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the matter has been under consideration for a considerable time?

Mr. McKNENA: Yes, and we are not yet in possession of all the facts. As soon as we are I will communicate with the hon. Member. I never said the expenditure was unproductive.

*Mr. REES: I am glad to hear it.

The Victualling Vote.

Mr. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can state when the Victualling Vote will be taken.

Mr. McKENNA: I am unable at present to name a date; but it will not be before Whitsuntide.

H.M.S. "Tiger."

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the hon. Member for King's Lynn may have permission to inspect the log of H.M.S. "Tiger" in order to ascertain what opportunities of night practice were accorded to her nucleus crew prior to her loss when she was manœuvring without lights at a speed of 20 knots.

Mr. McKENNA: No, Sir.

The "Tiger" Court Martial.

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the captain of H.M.S. "Berwick" was a member of the court martial inquiry into the collision of H.M.S. "Berwick" with H.M.S. "Tiger," by which the latter vessel was lost.

Mr. McKENNA: The Answer to the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative.

Mr. BELLAIRS: Will the right hon. Gentleman take into consideration how undesirable it is for a captain of one ship in a collision to be a member of the Court which tries the officer commanding the other ship?

Mr. McKENNA: I agree. But it is the rule that all captains shall serve, and unless objection was taken, the captain in question was bound to serve. The misfortune was that no objection was taken.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) asked if the right hon. Gentleman could give an undertaking that in future this should not occur again.

Mr. McKENNA: I hope so. I hope that in future cases objection will always be taken.

Naval Lieutenants.

*Captain FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will state how many lieutenants and supplementary lieutenants of the Royal Navy were on half-pay on 1st May, 1908; and how many of these were unavailable through illness.

Mr. McKENNA: The numbers asked for are approximately as follows:—

Lieutenants, R.N. (entered as cadets):—

On half-pay for private affairs, or waiting appointment; for long or short periods - - -	64
Sick and on half-pay - - -	18
Total - - -	82

Lieutenants, R.N. (supplementary list):—

On half-pay, at own request in every case - - - -	6
Sick and on half-pay - - - -	–
Total - - -	6
Grand Total (both lists) -	88

There are in addition eight lieutenants at present on full pay sick leave.

Boy Workers in Government Factories.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that boys are being discharged from the Woolwich, Enfield, and Waltham Abbey factories upon reaching the age of twenty-one; whether there is sufficient work in hand to justify the retention of these employees; and, if so, whether, in view of his promise that the staffs would be reduced to the minimum of wastage, he will have these discharges stopped.

*The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Acland, Yorkshire, Richmond): I regret that it is not at present possible to re-engage boys who reach the age of twenty-one, as men; for the reason that there is not sufficient work to justify such engagement. As soon as it becomes possible to make fresh engagements of men those who have been trained in the factory as boys will naturally have a first claim on reaching the age of twenty-one.

Mr. Luxenburg's Arrest.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is yet in a position to make any statement as to Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg's claim against the Russian Government for his illegal arrest and incarceration at Odessa in March last.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): I beg to refer the hon. Member to the reply given yesterday on this subject to the hon. Member for Hammersmith.

Mulai Hafid.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Moorish delegates from Mulai Hafid, now in Europe, solicited an audience at the Foreign Office; and, if so, what reply was given to them.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Answer is in the negative.

MR. ASHLEY: Did not a single delegate approach the right hon. Gentleman?

SIR EDWARD GREY: No, Sir.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the fact that Mulai Hafid is already in possession of Marakesh, the capital of Southern Morocco, and is now advancing on Fez, the northern capital, it is the intention of His Majesty's Government to recognise him as Sultan should he succeed in capturing the latter city.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am not aware that anything has occurred which would justify His Majesty's Government in forming any such intention.

MR. ASHLEY: With whom will the right hon. Gentleman negotiate in the event of requiring to negotiate with the Government of Morocca, if he does not negotiate with Mulai Hafid?

SIR EDWARD GREY: We cannot recognise more than one Sovereign at once.

Macedonian Reform.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give any information as to the progress of the negotiations now being carried on between the British and Russian Governments on the subject of Macedonian reforms.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Various points are still under discussion, but I cannot add at present to the information contained in the Papers laid before the House.

Old Age Pensions.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state approximately the number of persons in Great Britain and Ireland of over 70 years of age who at present are earning wages of over 10s. a week but under 15s. a week; and what the additional annual cost of old-age pensions would be if all these persons were to reduce their wages to 10s. in order to participate in the scheme of old-age pensions?

MR. GOULDING (Worcester): At the same time may I ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can give any estimate of the number of persons in the United Kingdom aged 70 years and over who are in receipt of incomes varying from 10s. to 15s. a week; and what would be the estimated cost of enlarging the scheme outlined by the Prime Minister in his Budget speech, so that a pension equal to the difference between such income and 15s. a week might be given to all such persons.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Mr. LLOYD GEORGE): My right hon. friend has asked me to answer these Questions. He has no information at his disposal which would enable him to answer either Question.

MR. GOULDING: On what estimates did the Government frame their Old-Age Pensions Bill?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. GOULDING: Are we not entitled to an answer regarding this very important Question?

*MR. SPEAKER. If the Question is so important, then I think the hon. Member might have given himself the trouble to put it down.

MR. GOULDING: With all respect, Sir, the Question is down.

*MR. SPEAKER: Then the hon. Member has had an Answer.

Sugar Duty.

Mr. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his refusal to sanction a rebate on duty-paid sugar applies to cases where it can be proved that the importer only paid the duty under compulsion because it was impossible to obtain bonded space, and that he was unable to sell the sugar before 18th May without having himself to allow a rebate in price equal to the reduction in the duty announced in the Budget speech.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: The information at my right hon. friend's disposal convinces me that the bonded accommodation for sugar at ports has been sufficient to meet all requirements. No applications for approval of temporary bonding facilities over the period 7th to 18th instant have been refused; on the contrary, satisfaction has been expressed in several quarters at the extra facilities afforded by the Board of Customs in this juncture.

In reply to a further Question by Mr. McArthur, Mr. J. A. Pease said his right hon. friend would no doubt consider any further representations that might be made to him.

Mr. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): Is it not the fact that the importer of the duty-paid sugar if he desires to export cannot get a drawback, whereas the sugar refiners who desire to export can get one?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must put that Question down.

Arrests for Drunkenness in London and Wales.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the number of arrests for drunkenness on Sunday last in London, Swansea, and Cardiff respectively.

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): I am unable to give the figures for the county of London, but in the Metropolitan Police District, which covers a larger area, there were 172 arrests for drunkenness on Sunday, the 10th inst. On the same day there were, in Swansea, four arrests, in Cardiff and the City of London none.

Dangers of the Colour Industry.

Mr. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been directed to an inquest recently held on Charles Davey, a labourer, lately in the employ of Messrs. Lewis Berger & Sons, colour manufacturers of Hackney, who was poisoned by arsenite of copper in the course of his employment; whether he is aware that it was brought out in evidence that the deceased had been working overtime on green paint for some time, that he got the green dust all round his eyes and about his nails, that his boots were also covered with green dust, and that the green was seen about his hands and face even after he had washed; if he is aware that it was stated in evidence that since Christmas ten or twelve men in the same employ had been invalided off through working on this same material; if he will state how many times during the past and the present year these works were visited by His Majesty's inspector of factories, and what report, if any, was made upon them; and if he can give any assurance that this is an exceptional case of negligence in connection with a most dangerous employment.

Mr. GLADSTONE: My attention has been called to the inquest on this case, and the facts disclosed in the evidence. The man was employed in the grinding mills during the ordinary period of employment, but about a month before his death he commenced to work overtime in the emerald green department. The actual cause of death, however, does not appear to have been clearly ascertained. The factory at which the man was employed has been frequently inspected by the factory department; nine visits were paid last year, and four this year. The "regulations for paints and colours containing lead," which were made by me last year, are in force in the factory, but do not apply to the emerald green department. I am informed, however, that similar precautions to those required by the regulations are voluntarily observed, and also that the firm, which has only recently taken over the works, and has been engaged in re-modelling the whole place, intends entirely to reorganise the work in the green department. The case is one of interest and importance, and my inquiries into it are not yet concluded.

Tailoring Trade and the Factory Act.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can now lay before the House of Commons the result of the investigations as to the complaints he has received respecting the non-observance in the tailoring trade of the provisions of the particulars clause of the Factory Act.

MR. GLADSTONE: I am informed that the firms referred to in my reply to the previous Question of the hon. Member are now complying with the provisions of the Particulars Order. The question of the observance of the Order in the tailoring trade will continue to receive the attention of the inspectors.

Shrewsbury Railway Disaster.

MR. CHIOZZA MONEY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has yet received any explanation from the railway company concerned on the subject of Colonel Yorke's Report on the Shrewsbury railway disaster; and whether the attention of other railway companies has been directed to Colonel Yorke's recommendations as to securing proper rest for the drivers of express trains.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): I am awaiting the observations of the London and North Western Railway Company on this Report; and upon receiving them will consider the question of communicating with the railway companies generally. I have, however, no doubt that the companies are aware of the nature of Colonel Yorke's recommendations.

Inspection of Weights and Measures in Yorkshire.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether complaint has been made to the Board by the West Riding County Council of the impracticability of the regulations of 1907, made under the Weights and Measures Act, 1904, which requires that local authorities' inspectors shall inspect the weights and measures of all traders on their premises once a year; whether on the request of the council, the Board have relaxed that rule to the extent of a biennial instead of an annual inspection; and whether the Board will use the power reserved to them in the regulations to grant further relaxation, in view of the complaint of the West Riding Council as to the inconvenience and expense of its administration in its present form, especially in rural districts.

MR. CHURCHILL: Complaint has been made by the West Riding County Council of the requirement of the Weights and Measures Regulations, 1907, that all traders' premises shall be inspected once a year, and the Board of Trade have informed the council that they are prepared to extend the period to two years, but that they have no power under the present regulations to extend the period further.

MR. LANE-FOX: But under the regulations is not dispensing power given to the Board?

MR. CHURCHILL: I am advised that that power is only for a limited period of years.

Unemployment Statistics.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what were the numbers and percentages of the unemployed in this country in the months of March and April, 1906, compared with the same months in 1908, so far as can be ascertained from the figures in his possession.

*MR. CHURCHILL: In the trade unions making returns to the Department the percentage returned as unemployed at the end of each of the months referred to by the hon. Member was as follows:—

	Percentage.
March, 1906	3·9
April, 1906	3·7
March, 1908	6·9
April, 1908	7·5

In March and April, 1908, employment was considerably affected by the disputes in the engineering and shipbuilding trades, which rendered idle a large number of workpeople not directly concerned in the disputes.

MR. FELL: I suppose these figures do not include the men out of work on account of the strikes and lock-outs?

*MR. CHURCHILL: They do not.

London Post Office Telephones—Clerical Staff.

MR. WILES (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can now state when the scheme for placing on the establishment the male clerical staff of the general manager of the London Post Office telephone department will come into force, so that the male portion of the staff may secure the same advantages which are already enjoyed by the female portion of the telephone service.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I have received a communication on this subject from the representatives of the staff in question. The matter has been under consideration with the Treasury.

Postmen's Wages and Re-classification.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General in connection with the re-classification of post offices for the purpose of postmen's wages, whether the new classification involving a lower scale of pay has been fixed for any office without first ascertaining through the Board of Trade the cost of living; and, if so, whether such a practice is a violation of the Select Committee's recommendations.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The Select Committee recommended that the new classification should be based upon the volume of work as ascertained by the post office, plus the cost of living of the locality as a whole, as ascertained by the Board of Trade. I have not yet received from the Board of Trade all the information necessary to determine this factor. The classification is therefore in many cases provisional until fuller information is available. At most of the offices thus provisionally classified the new scales of pay are higher than those previously in force.

Post Office Territorials—Allowance for attending Schools of Instruction.

MR. GRETTON (Rutland): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if, in view of the fact that the War Office allowance for Territorial soldiers attending the school of instruction has been reduced from 4s. to 2s. per diem, he will grant to Post Office employees who are Territorial soldiers, and who attend these schools, such proportion of their wages as will indemnify them from the loss they would otherwise sustain; and if he is aware that many private employers have already adopted this course.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: As I informed the hon. Member in reply to a previous Question on the 30th ultimo, post office servants are allowed special leave without pay to attend military schools if the exigencies of the service admit. This leave is in addition to the special leave prescribed by the Treasury for attendance at the annual camp, and while I sympathise with the efforts of Territorial soldiers to extend their knowledge of military matters I do not think that I could justify a further charge on the Post Office Votes by reason of any alteration which may have been made in military pay or allowances during attendance at these schools. I may add that I am in communication with the Treasury as regards the conditions of special leave for camp purposes.

Norwich Mail Cart Drivers.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that mail cart and van drivers and county mail cart drivers employed at the Norwich office are working sixty to seventy hours, and in some cases more, per week for wages varying from 15s. to 17s., and that these men receive no extra pay for Sunday labour nor allowance for holidays or sickness; if so, whether he will cause an inquiry to be made into the conditions thus prevailing with a view to hours and wages being adjusted to a fairer standard.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I will have inquiry made in the matter.

MR. CROOKS: Is it the fact that this firm are known as "Messrs. Never Done"?

[No Answer was returned.]

Missing Registered Letters.

MR. MURNAGHAN (Tyrone, Mid): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that a London firm recently had two £5 notes stolen from a registered letter, and that the claim of the firm for compensation was refused, on the ground that, as the letter as well as the money was not stolen, no liability attached to the Department; will he make inquiries into the matter, and can he say whether it is the official view that the Department is not responsible, up to a certain sum, for the safe delivery of notes and coin contained in a registered letter; and, if so, will he take steps to afford some security for the conveyance of money and valuables through the Post Office?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: A case has recently been brought to my notice in which there is reason to believe that two £5 notes were stolen in France from a registered letter from London. Compensation could not be given because under the regulations of the Postal Union none is payable in respect of the loss or damage of the contents of a registered packet which is not insured. It was open to the sender to have insured the contents of the letter by payment of an additional fee of 2d.

*MR. MURNAGHAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it is the common belief that the payment of the registration fee secures safe delivery of the contents of the letter, and will he take steps to disabuse the public mind on that point in order that losses similar to that mentioned in the Question may be avoided in the future?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: That is so; but in this matter we are under an International Convention of Postal Unions, and we have no power to grant compensation. This is a question of foreign, and not domestic administration.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS: Who gets the registration fee?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: That is dealt with under the Convention.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I recently called attention to a case where the contents of a registered letter had been abstracted in this country, and could get no satisfaction?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I think that was a case in which the letter was not delivered at all. Where we think the abstraction is due to carelessness in the Post Office, then we pay compensation.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): What is the advantage of registration over and above ordinary postage if it affords no protection?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: In the great bulk of cases it ensures safe delivery.

MR. ASHLEY: Is it quite fair that the Post Office should receive money as fees and give no compensation in cases where the registered letter is lost?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have explained we are acting under international regulations, and I have no power to grant compensation in such a case as this. I am, of course, open to criticism in regard to matters which arise in this country.

Floggings in Public Institutions.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he can state what are the Government institutions that permit the flogging of young men or young women who are over eighteen years of age; the kind of offence for which this flogging is administered; and the number of cases that have happened this year and when.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): I have no information.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): Is it not the fact that the floggings and canings in the ordinary sense in English schools do not involve the degradation which was involved in the case to which this Question refers? Has the right hon. Gentleman no control in such cases?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have said several times during the last fortnight that I have no intention of interfering with the discretion of the local managers.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: Do I understand that the right hon. Gentleman will not supply the House with the information he led it to believe was in his possession?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have made no attempt to mislead the House. I cannot answer for other Departments than my own.

Butter Advertisements.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether his attention has been called to an advertisement of milk-blended butter packed in casks, firkins, baskets, and two pound rolls, without printed notice, also in blocks one pound square long, with printed notice as required and approved, in the name of Coopman and Young, 48, St. John Street, Smithfield, London; and whether, in view of Section 9 of the Butter Bill of 1907, he will say whether this firm have ever been proceeded against, and, if so, with what result.

MR. J. A. PEASE (for Sir EDWARD STRACHEY): Our attention has been called to the advertisement to which my hon. friend refers and the matter is under consideration. We are not aware of any proceedings having been taken under Section 9 of the Butter and Margarine Act, 1907 against the firm mentioned.

Drunkenness in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can state the number of arrests or drunkenness on Sunday last in the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, respectively.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): The arrests for drunkenness on Sunday, 10th May, were in Glasgow thirty-one, in Edinburgh nine.

MR. WATT: Is the standard of drunkenness in Glasgow and Edinburgh the same? In Glasgow a man is supposed to be drunk, but in Edinburgh it is only a preliminary canter.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Is this drunkenness due to the use of pot still whisky?

Case of Thomas Flanagan of Glasgow.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if his attention has been called to the case of a boy, Thomas Flanagan, who was convicted at the Central Police Court, Glasgow, on 2nd April to five years in Slatefield industrial school; whether he is aware that this boy is only nine and a half years of age, that the clothes stolen were those of his brother, and taken from his father's house, and that this was his first offence; and whether, in these circumstances, he can see his way to mitigate the sentence.

MR. SINCLAIR: I have caused inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the case, and having regard to the reports that I have received in regard to the boy's character and antecedents, I think the action taken by the magistrate has been for his advantage, and I am not prepared to interfere.

Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Bill.

MR. JOYCE: I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland), whether the Bill promised in relation to Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) has yet been drafted; and can he say when it will be introduced.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): My hon. friend is in Ireland, and cannot answer himself. The Bill in question has been drafted, and my hon. friend hopes to introduce it at the earliest opportunity.

Irish Local Government Audits.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is intended to appoint this year an assistant clerk in charge of accounts under the Local Government Board for Ireland; whether this is a newly created office, and, if so, what is the ground for its creation; for how many years has the Board transacted its business without this office, and what have the disadvantages to its efficiency been in consequence; what are the conditions and qualifications necessary for the office; and who is it proposed to appoint.

MR. BIRRELL: The position in question is an existing position under a new title. Up till last year the post of assistant to the clerk in charge of accounts was described in the Estimates as a temporary staff post, and the salary was £200 a year. Last year, in consequence of the great increase of work under the Labourers' Act, the scale of salary for the post was fixed at £250 rising to £350 a year, and the title of the post was changed to that of assistant clerk in charge of accounts. Mr. C. R. S. Monsell, who had been assistant to the clerk in charge of accounts for seven years, was continued in the post.

Irish Local Government Appointments.

Mr. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is proposed to appoint this year a temporary assistant engineering inspector under the Local Government Board at a salary of £300; whether this is a new office; and, if so, on what grounds it is considered necessary.

Mr. BIRRELL: The post to which the Question refers is that of temporary assistant engineering inspector (architect), for which provision is made in the current Estimates for the first time. The appointment was made last year after the Estimates for that year had been settled. The creation of this temporary post was absolutely necessary in view of the great increase of work thrown on the engineering staff in the examination of the plans and specifications for labourers cottages under the new Act.

Mr. HAZLETON: How many temporary positions are there under the Local Government Board?

Mr. BIRRELL: A good many. I should have to inquire to say exactly.

Irish Local Government Accounts.

Mr. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state who is the clerk in charge of accounts under the Local Government Board for Ireland, and what was the date of his appointment; and for what reason it is proposed to increase his salary this year by £50 contrary to the regulations, which provide only for an increase of £15.

Mr. BIRRELL: The clerk in charge of accounts is Mr. M. Daly, who was appointed to that post on 1st April, 1900, having served under the Local Government Board since 16th September, 1881. The scale of salary for the post was revised in April 1907 in consequence of the great increase of work and responsibility due to the passing of the Labourers Act. The maximum salary of the post was raised from £450 to £500, and Mr. Daly, who was on the existing maximum, was at once advanced to the new maximum in recognition of his long and useful services.

Arrests for Drunkenness in Ireland.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of arrests for drunkenness on Sunday last in Dublin and Belfast respectively.

Mr. BIRRELL: The number of arrests for drunkenness on Sunday, 10th May was, in the Dublin Metropolitan Police district, five; and in Belfast, three.

Irish Local Government Auditors.

Mr. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the reason why provision has been made in the Estimates for 1908–9 for the appointment of an additional auditor under the Local Government Board for Ireland, in view of the fact that no decision to appoint an additional auditor has been arrived at.

Mr. BIRRELL: I find that I was mistaken in supposing that power is being taken in this year's Estimates to appoint another auditor. The additional auditor for whom provision is made in the Estimates was appointed in April 1907, after the Estimates for the past financial year had been presented.

Mr. MOONEY (Newry): What is his name?

Mr. BIRRELL: I will tell the hon. Member personally.

Irish Courthouses.

Mr. KAVANAGH (Carlow): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that all the courthouses in Ireland are vested in the high sheriffs of each county, and that, whilst the county councils have to maintain and are responsible for the upkeep of them, they have absolutely no control over them, either in giving or refusing leave for the use of them or for the disposal of any space within them; and whether he will take steps to make a change in the present law.

MR. BIRRELL: The custody and control of county courthouses are vested by statute in the high sheriff of the county. Any change in the matter would require legislation, and the Government cannot undertake to consider the question at present.

Birr Evicted Tenant.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have received an application for reinstatement from Mrs. Barry, Annagh, near Birr, county Tipperary, to her former holding; whether the evicted farm is on the landlord's hands; and have the Estates Commissioners approached the landlord with a view to the settlement of this case; and, if so, with what result.

MR. BIRRELL: Mrs. Barry's application was received by the Estates Commissioners since 1st May, 1907, and consequently the Commissioners have not yet made inquiries into the case.

Education Act Fines.

MR. O'SHEE (Waterford, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received resolutions of protest from Irish public bodies against the suggestion that two-thirds of the fines under the Education Acts should go to the Crown instead of in aid of the rates; whether the ratepayers have to bear the cost of enforcing the compulsory provisions as regards attendance of children at schools; and whether he will direct that the fines should be paid in recoupment of such costs.

MR. BIRRELL: I would refer to the Answer given by my right hon. friend the Attorney-General for Ireland to a Question on this subject put by the hon. Member for the Ossory Division on 17th February. It has been decided by the Superior Courts that under the Statutes governing the matter one-third only of the fines in question may be paid to the prosecutor, that is, the local authority. The Government have no power to direct any other than the statutory disposition of the fines.

Drainage of the Barrow.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has yet considered the scheme of Messrs. Glover and white for the drainage of the river Barrow; whether the same was submitted to the Board of Works, and, if so, has it reported thereupon; and is he now in a position to say what the intention of the Government is in respect to the said scheme, or any other, for the purpose of the drainage of the River Barrow.

MR. BIRRELL: The Report of the Board of Works upon the scheme of Messrs. Glover and White has been received and is under consideration. The matter is one of much complexity, but a decision will be arrived at with as little delay as possible.

Mr. Hawkes' Kilmichael Estate.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the tenants on the estate of Mr. Richard Hawkes, Kilmichael, county Cork, signed their purchase agreements in May, 1904; whether other estates in the neighbourhood, including that of Sir A. Warren, which were sold at a later date, have been absolutely vested in the tenants for a considerable period; and can he explain the cause of delay in regard to the Hawkes estate, and when the tenants may expect to have the vesting orders made in them.

MR. BIRRELL: The purchase agreements in the case of the estate of Mr. Richard Hawkes and others were lodged with the Estates Commissioners in December, 1905. The estate will not reach its turn to be dealt with for a considerable time, having regard to the large number of prior cases which are yet undisposed of. The Commissioners cannot trace any proceedings as having come before them for the sale of the estate of Sir A. Warren in County Cork.

Newtowngore Disturbances.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that on Monday, 13th April, 1908, a number of shots were fired on the public road at Newtowngore, county Leitrim, by a party of Orangemen, who were after working on an evicted farm at Tully, near Newtowngore, from which a man named Masterton was evicted, and which is now in the possession of a shopkeeper named Lipsey, who lives in Newtowngore; whether, seeing that the shots were fired by those men to intimidate their Catholic and Nationalist neighbours, who are largely in the majority, proceedings will be instituted against the perpetrators; and will he say if the parties had licences to carry firearms, and, if so, will such licences be revoked, so that the preservation of the peace of the district may be maintained.

MR. BIRRELL: On the occasion in question a party of labourers who had worked on Mr. Lipsey's farm was returning home, when two or three shots are said to have been fired by one of the party. The police have carefully investigated the case but have been unable to procure evidence of the identity of the offender, and consequently no proceedings can be instituted. For the same reason it cannot be ascertained whether the offender holds an excise licence, which is the only licence now required to carry firearms.

MR. KILBRIDE: Will the right hon. Gentleman send a copy of the Answer to Lord Ashtown?

MR. BIRRELL: I have no doubt he will see it.

Empire Day.

EARL WINTERTON: (Sussex Horsham): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the Treasury buildings on Empire Day.

The following Questions on the same subject also appeared on the Paper:—

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the India Office buildings on Empire Day.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the Colonial Office buildings on Empire Day.

EARL WINTERTON: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the Home Office buildings on Empire Day.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the buildings of the Scottish Office on Empire Day.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the Board of Trade buildings on Empire Day.

CAPTAIN FABER: To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the Local Government Board's buildings on Empire Day.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: To ask the President of the Board of Education whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's

Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the Education Board's buildings on Empire Day.

EARL WINTERTON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the Irish Office building on Empire Day.

EARL WINTERTON: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, having regard to the almost universal recognition of Empire Day by the self-governing communities of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the Seas, he will give instructions for the Union Jack to be flown on the War Office buildings on Empire Day.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): My various colleagues to whom similar Questions have been addressed agree with me that no sufficient reason has been shown for departing in this matter from the practice of our predecessors.

EARL WINTERTON: Arising out of that Answer, I beg to give notice that I shall raise this matter on the adjournment of the House.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that during the past few years, since his predecessors were in office, a very great increase in the feeling in this country and in the Empire beyond the Seas has undoubtedly grown up in favour of celebrating Empire Day, and whether he or any of the other Ministers to whom Questions were put down to-day can give any reason why they should not fly the flag on their respective buildings?

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Will the Prime Minister tell us at the same time what is Empire Day?

MR. ASQUITH: I am afraid I have nothing to add to the Answer I have already given.

The Public Trustee.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the Public Trustee is still a director of any public company.

MR. ASQUITH: I have no further information beyond that I have already given.

MR. BOTTOMLEY: Arising out of that somewhat discourteous Answer, may I ask whether it is with the consent of the Government that the Public Trustee combines with the discharge of his official duties those of directorships of public companies, especially of an insurance company?

MR. ASQUITH: No, Sir. I told the hon. Member the other day that the Public Trustee, having resigned all his other directorships, proposed to resign this one. I do not think it right in the case of a distinguished public servant to ask him whether he has complied with his undertaking.

FERRIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A. Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 148.] Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 148.] Bill (as amended in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 231.]

POLICE FORCES (WEEKLY REST DAY).

Ordered that Mr. Charles Duncan be discharged from the Select Committee on Police Forces (Weekly Rest-Day). Ordered, that Mr. William Edwin Harvey be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) BILL.

Mr. Akers-Douglas, Mr. Lewis Harcourt, and Mr. Morton nominated Members of the Select Committee on the Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill.—(*Mr. Whiteley*).

COMMONS.

Mr. Carr-Gomm, Mr. Cowan, Mr. Winfrey, Mr. Lardner, Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, Mr, Hicks Beach, and Mr. Arkwright, nominated Members on the Select Committee on Commons.—(*Mr. Whiteley*).

MONUMENT TO SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

Resolution reported: "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying that His Majesty will give directions that a Monument be erected in the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster, to the memory of the late Right Honourable Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, with an inscription expressive of the high sense entertained by this House of the eminent services rendered by him to the Country in Parliament and in great offices of State, and to assure His Majesty that this House will make good the expenses attending the same."

Resolution agreed to.

Address to be presented by Privy Councillors and Members of His Majesty's Household.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [18th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Lord Balcarres*).

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*SIR J. COMPTON RICKETT (Yorkshire, W.R., Osgoldcross) said that at the interruption of business on the preceding night he was endeavouring to show to the House that it was to the interest of all parties that a settlement of this question should be attained. Party lines at the present time were blurred by questions of religion involving differences of opinion. There were good churchmen on the Liberal side of the House and a certain number of Nonconformists who in politics were generally attached to the Unionist Party, but who on account of the education dispute supported the Liberal Government at the last election. In the interests of all, therefore, there was good reason for clearing this matter up before the next general election, so that the country should not be confused by an issue that ran quite apart from ordinary political differences. He would like to say at once that hon. Members on that side of the House, and particularly the well-informed Nonconformists of the country, realised to the full, and indeed did not need to be reminded of, the great work that the Church of England had done in the past for education. They were quite aware that when the country had failed in its interest and declined to bear its share of the burden the Church took up that duty. They had no desire to break the continuity of her teaching to the children of her membership. It was of particular importance at the present time that religious teaching for the young should be maintained. For reasons that he need not discuss there was not very much chance of any Church of any denomination securing recruits from the adults of the country. Other experiments, social and otherwise, were being tried to give effect to the philanthropic ideas of the country, and Church methods appeared to have slipped into the background; so the one hope of any denomination lay in their getting hold, as early as possible, of the youth of the land. They were, therefore, not by any means opposing the desire of the Church of England to preserve her time-honoured tradition of teaching religion in the schools. But they must ask her to recognise that in times past a great many more duties were put on her than the State asked at the present time. Once she was sought for miraculous cures, for unction, for poor relief up to the time of the dissolution of the monasteries, and up to a very much later date, for education. Successively she had been relieved of these duties, and certainly her property had not been taken away in proportion to the relief afforded her in the discharge of those duties. They asked now, not in any spirit of hostility, for the co-operation of the Church in the settlement of the education question. The present Bill unified education. Whatever might be said of contracting-out, the Bill treated it as an exception and recognised only one class of public elementary schools, and for that class it endeavoured to secure reality of public control. There was, indeed, a half-hearted recognition of the principle in the Act of 1902. Under that Act control was conceded to the extent of one-third of the actual management of the non-provided schools. To that extent it was a recognition of the principle, but it was not effective. He would remind those who viewed the present Bill with suspicion that the management of the schools in the future was not going to be thrown into the hands of secularists or Nonconformists. The Anglicans, and even the Roman Catholics, would have a very large share of the management, and probably in many parts of the country the Anglicans would be in a majority and would provide the machinery through which the law would take effect. This Bill allowed facilities for denominational teaching. It had been suggested that by it such teaching was put in the background and treated as subordinate to the Cowper-Temple teaching, but that need not be so, and it certainly was not the intention of the Bill. There would be no difficulty in putting both classes of teaching—between 9 and 9.30—before the secular work of the school commenced, and they could then run concurrently. They knew that in a large number of Church schools Bible teaching, indistinguishable from that provided in the ordinary elementary schools, was given on four days of the week, and the Catechism was taught on the fifth day. Some wise friends of his told the parents of Nonconformist scholars to keep their children away on the day for that lesson. There would be little need for the Church of England to revise her own method if she would accept Bible instruction for three or four days in the week, and be content to come in and give the lessons of her own Church on the fifth day. With regard to the teachers it was important there should be no subscription to religious creeds imposed on them, and he asked, would it be wise to make a demand on the teachers of the ordinary school—either head or subordinate—for the special purpose of teaching the doctrines of the Church of England or of any other denomination? On the other hand, the teachers selected to give Church of England teaching should be trained members of that Church. The employment of State teachers without some test in the matter of religion did not seem to agree with the standard set up by those who were strong supporters of the denominational system. Moreover, if they agreed that real Bible instruction of a solid and substantial character should be preserved in the ordinary schools of the country then it was essential that the head teacher should see that the teaching was properly given, and to ask that teacher to volunteer to give lessons for any denomination or Church would be to press upon him or her a divided allegiance and perhaps to take him or her away from the proper duties of the school. On every ground the head teacher should be allowed to superintend. The distinction as between the head teacher and the assistant was already recognised in the London continuation schools, where the head teacher did not enjoy the privilege of engaging in evening work conceded to his assistant. It was obviously necessary to guard against any indirect reversal of that decision, because if a head teacher was to be permitted to hire himself out to give lessons in the school there would always be the temptation on the part of the local authority to anticipate the appointments of certain teachers. Any subscription to a religious creed by the teacher was surely now out of the question. He had already said that to create such a test would be difficult at the present time—it would need to be revised almost from year to year. The drafting of a test that would stand for all time would be a task beyond the wit of man. Bible instruction, which he believed most of the House desired should be given, had been tried for nearly forty years. No one was so foolish as to suggest that a teacher did not require some test as to his efficiency in giving even simple Bible teaching. He ought to know something about the mind of the child, the psychology of the child; he ought to have a practical knowledge of the

Bible, altogether apart from adhesion to any religious creed. He did not wish to be misunderstood when he said it would be possible to draw from Homer lessons of courage and virtue without requiring the teacher to settle the boundaries of myth and fact in that tradition. The Bible could be taught as literature, and as containing moral lessons and parables of the Unseen. The material of religion could be acquired at the State expense, in the State schools. The spiritual dynamic must be taught in the Church, the Sunday School or the home. Nor was there any real antagonism from the secularists of the country. In some districts it was true that Bible teaching, always optional, had not been adopted, but the cases could be counted on the fingers of the two hands. There was difficulty in the teaching of morals unless it was attached to some historical fact, or given with some religious sanction. Science itself had its hinterland of the Unknown. With religion it looked wistfully and expectantly into the void. The Bill, therefore, continued the rudimentary religious teaching which had proved to work well and was demanded by the people of this country. It was not the Nonconformist form of creed. The Free Churches of this country held strong views on the theory of the Church and the use of the Sacraments, but they said that neither doctrine nor theory should be taught at the public expense. Those who were irreconcilable, those who desired to stand out of the national system had, under the contracting out clause, the opportunity of showing their fidelity to their own views by contributing to their own schools, and taking them into their own hands; at the same time, they would receive a large subvention to assist them in carrying them on. No one regarded the contracting out clause as satisfactory. They looked upon it as an objectionable feature, and if there was a real intention to abandon it no one would be more happy to do so than the Liberals and Nonconformists. They did not desire to see an important section of the schools of this country fall out of the ordinary line of education. The Liberal attitude to contracting out was to regard it as the exception. The objection of the hon. Member for Waterford appeared to be one of terms—if they could agree upon terms his objection practically disappeared. But the hon. Member for Leicester raised a very proper objection when he pointed out that possibly contracting out would lead to a reduction in the salaries of teachers and that the efficiency of the schools would be sacrificed. Both of these objections would, no doubt, be met by a system of grouping of schools, and the securing of greater economy in administration. The Bishop of St. Asaph in his Bill desired that the Church of England should not contract out. As Liberals they would hail the adhesion of the Church schools to the national system, and would listen to proposals for extended facilities in order to avoid separation. Nonconformists only asked that they might have the same standing as the rest of the churches of the country. They had had to win their place in the State first as individuals, then as collectivists in federal action. They had from their meagre resources built their churches, trained their ministry, supported their colleges, crowded their altars with sacrifice, and won, step by step, liberty of worship, and access to opportunities of culture. First they demanded toleration, and at last, they asked for equality not for the purpose of aggression as a means of injuring others, but to use it in the interests of the State and in fellowship and friendship with all other churches.

Mr. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton) said the hon. Member who had just sat down had made a solid and weighty contribution to the debate, and he believed he was the first speaker in any part of the House who had given unqualified support to the Bill on which the House was about to divide. As far as they on the Opposition side of the House were concerned they were placed in a position of some difficulty by an evident disposition on the other side of the House to accuse them of absolute disinclination to compromise on any terms. It would indeed be a serious indictment if it could be truly said that they had barred and bolted the golden gate of compromise, but in the position that presented itself to them and to the country at the present moment they were bound to reflect that the

Second Reading of this Bill represented a definite step in the deliberate and definitely adopted policy of the Government. They had had in the course of the last few years repeated statements of that policy; none of these had made any conciliatory proposal, not even the introductory speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty. It would be within the recollection of the House that the First Lord of the Admiralty introducing his first Bill, said—

> "It must not be supposed that this measure is intended in any sense to be a settlement of the education question. After the experience of my right hon. friend the Chief Secretary, who in his comprehensive and generous measure of last session went to the extreme limit of concession, it is obvious that no legislative settlement can be obtained until the relations between this House and another place have been readjusted."

That was the view of the Government, that the matter must be postponed to a great constitutional settlement. A little later the late Prime Minister said, when the abandonment of the Bill in question had been announced to the House—

> "We see our way to propose that we should undertake next session the great task of putting the educational system of the country in order . . . . It can never have been supposed, I should think by anyone, that we should be content to acquiesce in the position of affairs which was left by the House of Lords at the end of last session, and therefore the announcement that in the very earliest session available to us we will deal with the question on broad lines which will be our own lines—this announcement cannot give rise to any surprise. . . . With the immediate intention and prospect of full relief by the adoption of a larger measure I think the best thing is not to proceed further with this Bill."

A few weeks ago the present Prime Minister said in the country—

> "The Education Bill to be introduced early in the session would be a short Bill, a simple Bill, and a drastic Bill."

That was his idea of compromise. The First Commissioner of Works, speaking in the country so recently as the end of March, said—

> "The Government Bill was the last word on denominational compromise, and if it was rejected he saw no solution except a rigid secular system."

Having been told from every authoritative source on the Government side that no compromise of any kind except such as was contained within the four corners of the Bill would be offered by the Government the Opposition was to be arraigned before the bar of the country as making party capital out of a discreditable quarrel if they did not come forward themselves with a constructive programme. So far as the First Lord of the Admiralty was concerned he had said the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill was in its main features identical with his own Bill. Having made that amazing statement the right hon. Gentleman suggested that the two Bills might be amalgamated. The first observation it was necessary to make on that proposal was that the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill contained in clear and explicit terms three of the very points insistence on which by the House of Lords rendered the attempted settlement of 1906 impossible. There was, first of all, the point that there should be right of entry into all the council schools. They were told it was impossible to discuss that. The second point was that teachers should be allowed to give the teaching, and the third point was that there should be at least compulsory Cowper-Temple teaching in every elementary school in the country. These being the three points upon which they were told the House of Lords was wrong and unreasonable in insisting, it was a little surprising now to be told that the Bill introduced in another place insisting on every one of them was in substance identical with the proposals made by the right hon. Gentleman. On every occasion when he had ventured to make an observation on the education question he had again and again, as the Member for North-west Manchester had in his maiden speech last night, pointed out the extreme difficulty with which the Government found themselves face to face in the north of England as soon as these proposals were understood, and he was sure the House would be glad to know whether as the result of a fortnight's higgling and wriggling over the education question by the President of the Board of Trade in North-west Manchester the views of the Government as to the reception their proposals were likely to meet with in the country had undergone any modification. He would also venture to ask for a little more explicit information from the President of the Board of Trade on the subject of the special treatment of the Roman Catholics, which he was authorised at a most critical period of his campaign to announce to the constituency on behalf of the Government. It was perfectly clear that the right hon. Gentleman would not have given those assurances unless he was authorised to do so by the First Lord of the Admiralty on behalf of the Government. On that assumption might he suggest that the right hon. Member would have avoided some Parliamentary embarrassment if he had explained what was the nature of the concession that he proposed to give to Roman Catholics. Would the Minister for Education say even now, in order that he might not inflict upon the House hypothetical figures which might not prove to be based on the facts as they would develop? Was his view now that Catholics were to be treated in an exceptional way by addition to the grant or by continuing to them assistance from the rates? Without prying in any way into domestic secrets he would like to ask the Minister for Education what was the form of the special relief that was going to be given to Roman Catholics. The Opposition had never wavered so far as he knew on the subject of the position of Roman Catholics; they were strongly of opinion that Roman Catholics were entitled to receive aid from the rates, and if he were to state a reason for that he found it in the speech of the Chief Secretary for Ireland the other day on the proposal to establish a University in Ireland. With the substitution of one single word, "school" for "University," the Government arrived at a principle capable of application to the education controversy—

> "I challenge the most confirmed and determined Nonconformist in this House. He will find that if he objects to a school simply because it is set up in a country where most of the people belong to one way of religious faith, and as a consequence that religious faith is freely represented on the governing body—if he objects to that his objection is not to my scheme, but to the religion of those people."

He was asked at the election, as he fancied many Members of the House were, a question in a somewhat epigrammatic form, which was widely circulated on behalf of the Roman Catholic community: Will you vote for Catholic teachers for Catholic children in Catholic schools, first, last, and all the time? The question was not perhaps couched in terms of art, but nobody would be unaware of what the real meaning of that question was, and until the Government told them what was to be the amount of the grant to be given to Roman Catholics it was utterly impossible for anyone who represented many Roman Catholics, as he did, to deviate from that pledge by giving any support at all to the present proposal. How did this work out? He would specially ask the attention of the last speaker who had told them that the one thing which he and his co-religionists desired in this matter was equality of treatment with others — he would specially ask the hon. Member to address his mind to the question of how Roman Catholics and Anglicans, if this Bill passed, and on the lines of comparison which he put before him, would receive that equality. What was the position to-day? In London each council child cost the public funds £6 10s. Each Roman Catholic child cost £3 15s., which under the terms of the present Bill was to be reduced to £2 7s. a child. The average attendance at the London Catholic schools was 30,000 children, so that the total amount saved to the rates was £82,500 a year. How was the proposal of the Government calculated to affect the position of the Catholic children in London at the present moment? Mr. Charles Russell, a well-known Liberal, and, as the House well knew, the son of a distinguished Liberal, had prepared some figures, certainly not couched in any spirit of animus against the present Government, and which he thought the Government would acknowledge to be in all substantials correct. Taking the two typical dioceses of Westminster and Southwark the number of schools was 178 and the total average attendance 40,822. The total present expenditure was £124,000 or £3 1s. per head per child. The cost of maintenance was £23,000, leaving a total expenditure of £14,823. The proposed new grant of 47s. a child as a maximum would produce as a maximum £95,931. That would reduce the income of the Catholic schools in London by

£52,392. If they took the case of Liverpool, he had been supplied with figures by some of the constituents of the Attorney-General for Ireland who gave very definite pledges at the election, which pledges neither by his vote nor by his speeches had he made any attempt to redeem, showing that in Liverpool the increase would be £12,000 a year. He wished the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had found it possible to explain on what principle of equality, which he told them was his object in relation to London, Roman Catholics were to pay £52,391 more than his co-religionists paid for their schools while at the same time they paid every farthing which he paid for the rating of his own schools. The hon. Gentleman found no time to explain how this was to be carried out. He had spoken at some length on Catholic schools because he wished to make it perfectly clear that so far as he was concerned, and he thought as far as Protestant Liverpool was concerned, there was every desire that rate-aid should be continued to Roman Catholic schools, both in the interests of fair and equal treatment and in the interests of educational efficiency. But, of course, they said at the same time that rate-aid must equally be given to the Anglican schools of Lancashire. Hon. Gentlemen who represented other parts of the country would speak for them. In Lancashire at the present time in the urban areas the voluntary schools had 350,000 children and the council schools about 215,000. That was to say, the voluntary schools would have to find 30s. a child for 350,000 children. It came to this, that three-fifths of the virile populous and progressive county of Lancashire were to be thrown into an educational back-water, and all the rates of all the boroughs were to go to two-fifths of the children. That was the fair and equal treatment which was the ideal of the last speaker. There were 600 voluntary schools in rural areas with 115,287 children in attendance. The local education authorities, taking them in the aggregate, had 85 schools with an attendance of 25,000, and it was put forward as a proposal which Lancashire was likely to accept, that the local education authorities with its 85 schools was going to take over without one penny of payment, the 600 schools which had been built by the exertions of Church people. He hoped the Minister for Education would find time to deal with the case of Mickleham in Surrey, which the noble Lord the Member for Chorley had cited. In that case the right hon. Gentleman proposed to take the school on the appointed day. He proposed to pay nothing and to allow the managers to use the school on two nights a week and heating and lighting. The school was actually completed last year by Church people at a cost of £2,390 with the specific object of avoiding Cowper-Temple teaching, and this school was to be taken over without any compensatory privilege except that they might have Cowper-Temple teaching. He could give many instances of schools built in Lancashire quite recently which came under the same condition. Could the right hon. Gentleman who opened this discussion produce any representative who sat on his own side of the House for an urban centre of population in Lancashire who would get up and say there was any chance of these proposals being accepted in Lancashire? No one who knew the present Secretary to the Local Government Board was unaware that it would be impossible for him, merely because he now held an office he well deserved, to vote for a Bill which in his conscience he thought was a wrong Bill. Therefore they were perhaps entitled to assume—though he did not know what the hon. Gentleman's plans were—that he had received some assurance that the vote he would give in this division, if he did give one, would represent merely an academic expression of opinion. It would be quite impossible for him to support to-day a Bill of which he said only a few weeks ago—

> "I hope that nobody else will get the credit of destroying it, let us destroy 'the thing.'"

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Masterman, West Ham, N.): I never said anything of the kind in connection with this Bill. I don't know whether that is important.

Mr. F. E. SMITH said it was very important. If he had misquoted the hon. Member, though he had consulted *Hansard,* he fully accepted the disclaimer. The hon. Gentleman would not disown the very important statement that he expressed a strong hope, regretting that his vituperative powers were inferior to those of the Secretary to the Admiralty, that the Bill would be destroyed.

MR. MASTERMAN: I had every intention of voting for the Bill when I had not the honour of being a Member of the Government—and said so in my speech.

MR. F. E. SMITH said the hon. Gentleman was not singular on that side of the House in that he was going to vote for a Bill of which he certainly said he disapproved in its most important provisions. The hon. Gentleman would not say that he did not hold the view that contracting-out was of the very essence of the scheme. ["No."] Would anyone explain what the essence of the Bill was? It was understood that a certain line of what was humorously called conciliation having failed in 1906 its place was to be taken by the contracting-out clause. If that was not the essence of the Bill would somebody explain it? In regard to this proposal for contracting-out they had said more than once that they stood exactly where the Secretary to the Admiralty stood when he said it was a disgusting proposal to contract out.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Dr. MACNAMARA, Camberwell, N.): On that occasion the hon. and learned Member voted for contracting-out.

MR. F. E. SMITH said he was not sure that the hon. Member was right, but in any case it was immaterial.

DR. MACNAMARA: But here is the division list.

MR. F. E. SMITH said he quite accepted the hon. Member's statement, but as an alternative to what had he supported it? At the time the Minister in charge of the Bill expressly pointed out the distinction between the scheme of contracting-out which was described as an exception grafted upon an exception. The reasons which animated him in giving the vote which he gave in favour of contracting-out did not apply in any way to the contracting-out now proposed. If it was disgusting in the interests of educational efficiency in a case which could only arise five or six times, what were they to say when it was a case which might arise in 50 per cent. of the schools of the country? There was no case for making special terms for the Irish Party. Supposing this Bill or the Bill which took its place was sent to another place with special provisions in favour of Roman Catholics. He professed no knowledge about what would take place in another place except that which was possessed by every ordinary observer. But if it was passed and sent up with special facilities for Roman Catholics, he felt sure it would be sent back with a proviso that the same facilities should be enjoyed by Anglicans. Was that the quarrel on which the Government were going to the country? The First Lord of the Admiralty said the Opposition desired to keep this quarrel alive in order to promote party interests. He believed this charge to be profoundly unjust, but assuming it were true, what did it mean? They could only achieve party interests by keeping a popular cause alive. If their cause was popular in the country on what principle of democratic government should they accept proposals like these which were grossly unjust and had not even the qualifying merit of popularity? A suggestion was made only yesterday which, if it was generally accepted, would point the road along which the goal of compromise might be reached. The hon. Member for the Carnarvon District, who was a very thoughtful and able representative of Welsh Nonconformity, made a speech to which he invited the attention of the House and of those who thought they had no grievance. This admission was made last night by the hon. Member. He said that this Bill would certainly remedy the Nonconformist grievance in single school areas, but, he asked, was it certain that Parliament would not create a grievance as real on the part of Churchmen because a large number of Church schools had been built at great sacrifice whose only object was to secure denominational teaching. Those were courageous words, and if they represented the view of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Government he would be very slow to say that compromise was impossible. The hon. Member also stated that as long as Nonconformists advocated Cowper-Temple teaching, they consistently refused to Roman Catholics and Anglicans the right to say that their form of religion should be taught at the expense of the State and by State-paid teachers. He added that he was amazed that the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham were not accepted when the last Education Bill was introduced. Would the right hon. Gentleman opposite tell the House whether he accepted that view or not? If he did the case was not altogether hopeless. The right hon. Gentleman must also recognise that the hon. Member who had spoken was clearly right in saying what they had been saying for years, namely, that they were endowing Nonconformity by this Bill. He would like to call attention to the statement of the hon. Member for Louth that the abandonment of their sectarian schools had tended to reduce the financial burden imposed upon many of the members of his church. Evidently the hon. Member's contribution to a compromise was to make them a present of this financial burden. The only way in which a lasting peace could be obtained was by a recognition of the parents' rights. If that were accepted they must also accept the principle that those who contributed equally to the rates must expect equal treatment. If that were once recognised he was convinced that the administrative difficulties could be dealt with. It was clear that the single-school area came within the range of those difficulties. The hon. Member opposite had quoted two cases where a real grievance was disclosed as far as Nonconformists were concerned. He had quoted a school where the scholars were overwhelmingly Nonconformist as compared with the Church of England, and yet no provision was made for Nonconformist religious teaching. The Bishop of Manchester had expressed his willingness to assist in any arrangement which would make it impossible for this difficulty to be stereotyped in the future. As far as urban areas were concerned, the difficulties were nothing like so serious. In most cases there was a choice of schools and a parent could send his children to whichever school he liked. They were confronted with the problem that the education authority might be embarrassed by demands from Anglicans, Jews, Moravians, or Thugs, asking that they should have a particular kind of religious teaching for their children. Did anybody, who had had any experience in rural districts, believe that such a difficulty would present itself. The hon. Member for Louth had given them two typical cases under the single school area, and they could have been dealt with by the principle of parental right. The late Chief Secretary had pointed out that there were practically only four cases to be met, namely, the Anglicans, the Nonconformists, the Jews, and the Roman Catholics. Did any hon. Member think they would be asked to provide teaching for any other religious community than those four? If that statement were true, then there was no difficulty, and it was idle to say that it was impossible to meet those cases. Let the right hon. Gentleman go to the largest workhouse in London and he would find that the difficulties of administration were the same there as would have to be faced by a large school if it accepted the principle of parental right. In the workhouse they were dealt with simply by the method he was suggesting. The parent of the child in the workhouse or even the child itself said he was a Catholic, an Anglican, a Nonconformist, or a Jew, and that particular religious education was provided for them without friction or difficulty. The administrative difficulties were great, but many of them would begrudge no effort on their part to assist the Government in overcoming them. There were only two real obstacles in the path of the Government's adopting the principle of parental right The first was stated by the First Lord of the Admiralty, and was based upon popular control, and the second was formulated in the cry: No tests for teachers. As far as popular control was concerned there was no objection to conceding what little remnant was withheld under the Act of 1902. In that Act almost complete popular control was given in all respects, except in so far as the simple appointment of the teacher was concerned. What were they to say about the cry of no tests for teachers after the contracting-out proposals contained in this Bill and the speech of the hon. Member for Louth last night? To this cry must be assigned the most conspicuous tombstone in the cemetery of election generalisations. Lord Crewe gave it up in the House of Lords at the time of the Amendments to the 1906 Bill. It was once for all surrendered when an agreement was come to by the Government that no teacher should be appointed who was not acceptable to the parents committee. How was it supposed that the parents committee were going to decide. How were Roman Catholics going to decide whether a teacher would be acceptable to them? Would they inquire into his qualifications to teach cookery? The only way they would be able to determine it would be by finding out whether they were qualified by belief in the doctrine and teaching peculiar to the denominational faith. What did the hon. Member for the Louth Division say? The hon. Gentleman said that no local authority would dream of appointing a Protestant teacher to a Roman Catholic school. Why not? That was what the Opposition wanted to know, if there was no test for teachers. What became of the free play of competition among teachers? What became of every post being open to merit without restriction of creed? The hon. Gentleman said there were methods of ascertaining what the religious opinions of the teachers were. That was his proposal, and that was the Government scheme. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] Well, the hon. Gentleman was repudiated. He and his friends were glad to hear that the solution he held up to the Roman Catholics was not well-founded. The hon. Gentleman consoled them that under this Bill they would really get Roman Catholic teaching. The right hon. Gentleman opposite shook his head, and he understood that he did not agree with the hon. Gentleman that they would get Roman Catholic teaching. It was a great pity that that was not explained at Manchester during the recent election, when they were told that concessions were going to be given when this Bill was brought forward again. The Government would substitute for a candid and legitimate inquiry, an inquisition which was private, clandestine, and impossible to answer. When this Bill joined its predecessors, as he feared it must do, he would venture to ask the right hon. Gentleman to consider even now whether it was not possible to formulate a scheme upon a basis accepted by both sides of the House and dependent upon parental right. If the Government would help to reach the final stage of this long drawn controversy on these lines, he was sure the right hon. Gentleman, on whose promotion everybody would congratulate him, would go down to history as the Minister who succeeded where many of his predecessors failed, because he laid his foundations deep and truly upon the basis of universal equality.

*MR. ADKINS (Lancashire, Middleton) said any Member who addressed the House after the fascinating and eloquent speech of the hon. and learned Member would find himself at a great disadvantage, and he would find himself at a double disadvantage if he happened to be a Lancashire Member who had survived the various forms of rhetoric which on the First Reading had been launched against them by Members of the Opposition. All through the winter they had been suffering under the excommunication by bill, book, and candle of the Bishop of Manchester, and they were told by the hon. and learned Member on the First Reading that they were sure to be destroyed if they supported the Bill. They were also told that day that no Member on that side of the House representing a Lancashire constituency dare get up to support the Government. It was not for the hon. and learned Member to prophesy what their fate might be, but before his doom was completed he should like to state why it was not only possible, but as they thought it was in the strictest line of duty for Lancashire Members to support most heartily the Second Reading. After all as they had been told already, this controversy was not new. The hon. and learned Member began his speech by saying that this was but one step in the controversy, and when they met their constituents and faced the electors month after month in that long campaign, when the last moribund Parliament was dragging to its close this question was discussed on the platform in conference in public and in private, and there was no issue in this Parliament which had been so thoroughly thrashed out long before this Parliament met. All these alternatives and all this easy criticism was directed by persons less able and less attractive than the hon. and learned Member, but no less sincere and no less representative. Therefore, they said, having faced this question before and having met before the general election the full force of that clerical crusade of which the hon. and learned Member was the best lay helper, they felt no additional tremors when they heard those arguments used across the floor of the House. What, after all, was the central point of the speech they had just heard, and of the speech delivered yesterday by the hon. Member for North-West Manchester, a speech on which he would like to congratulate the hon. Member both for its great ability and for his happy freedom from nervousness? What was the central position so far as Lancashire was concerned? It was that at present there were a large superiority in numbers of scholars in non-provided schools in urban Lancashire over those in council schools. No doubt that was true, but before they could base on that the argument based upon it yesterday and to-day, one would like to know how many of these scholars in voluntary schools represented people who really wished them to be there and who would still keep them there if there was a provided school within reach of every child. When the hon. and learned Member dealt with that question, and when he had the requisite knowledge, then they would be prepared to meet the highly changed position. At present his figures had this disadvantage as compared with his phrases, that they were no more helpful to the discussion, and much less attractive to listen to. The hon. and learned Gentleman placed in the centre of his speech with great force, what was argued yesterday with much less force, that the provisions for contracting-out were of the essence of the measure. They were told by the noble Lord the Member for the Chorley Division that contracting-out was the backbone of the Bill. They had been told yesterday and to-day that the Bill was founded on contracting-out. He had no gift for anatomical metaphor but he should like to say that in his opinion the real core of the Bill was not contracting-out, but the principle that there should be a council school within the reach of every child. No doubt the adjustment of that principle to the infinitely varying difficulties of different places was a matter well worthy of the consideration of this House, and might well call for help from all parties in the House and men of all varieties of experience, but important and difficult as would be the methods by which that principle could be carried out they could, he thought, consider it in Committee. These matters, though of high, were still of secondary concern. The real principle was the one which he had suggested to the House, and was to be found in that provision of the Bill. If that was the case, he, for one, would wish to support the Bill, because that was its central principle, though he was grateful to the hon. and learned Member for the clearness with which he had analysed the objections which could be taken to that principle, and when he sought to represent to the House how easy it would be to carry out the opposite principle. There were only two other principles on which national education could be dealt with. One which they had heard mentioned in the debate by nearly every speaker only to be rejected was called the secular solution. In regard to that, as had already been said, when under the existing law they could have secular education in any local government area if a majority of the electors desired it, and when in practice that had never come about, surely the House would do well to consider other solutions rather than that one which would have far more to be said for it in practice as indeed it had much to be said for it in logic and theory if it could be pointed to as in actual and practical working in any part of the country. The other proposal mentioned in vague terms by Members of the Opposition, mentioned in adroit terms by the hon. and learned Member as being the principle of parental rights had been developed with clearness by the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone in his speech on the First Reading which he asked the House to consider in dealing with the proposal. The noble Lord said—

> "I would not teach the religion of the Thugs, but so long as the religions were moral and in accordance with the law, and I accept this fully, all religions should be taught equally by the State, and there should be no preference, privilege, or advantage given by the State to one religion more than to the others."

The hon. and gallant Member for the Abercromby Division of Liverpool interposed the remark "By the teachers?" and the noble Lords replied—

> "Certainly, but I cannot go into the details."

He accepted fully the high sincerity of the noble Lord which was the prized possession of members on that side of the House also. But he asked the House to see what this alternative meant when it was put forward in such completeness by the noble Lord. Take an ordinary Midland village such as that where his home was situated. There was a Church of England not too well attended. There was a chapel belonging to the Baptists, there was a small community of Primitive Methodists, and there were a number of persons who, unhappily, did not organise their lines on the principle of denominational loyalty. What were they going to do in a village of 500 people if that was going to be the principle. They must have not one but three or five schools so that everybody might have for their child not only their special faith taught, but taught by people who held that faith in an atmosphere congenial to that faith and free from an influence hostile to the faith throughout the school curriculum. That was the principle acted on under great sacrifices and with the greatest devotion by members of the Roman Catholic Church, and he spoke of the principle and of its application with complete respect. What he would point out with great deference was that if this was to be a guiding principle of national application, a principle held not only by hon. Members on that side of the House but one which it would be well for the whole country to agree to, they were faced with this result, that all national education would become impossible. It would break down because of the expense, because of the inevitable incompetency of the teachers they would get, and it would break down because of the impossible task of giving adequate education in tiny schools removed from wide influences where they could not have enough children to secure proper teaching for each stage in the school life of the child. Therefore, when there was put forward to the House an alternative to the Government proposal, the question was, would this alternative be possible if it became of universal application? He had shown that the noble Lord's principle, much as was to be said for it, would be impossible if it were universally applied, and it was no answer to quote the experience of workhouse schools or the experience of other countries. Why were not Englishmen who chose to sacrifice much that made life worth living in order to be loyal to their own particular religious society, to have as much consideration shown to them as those who belonged to the august communities of Rome or of Canterbury? If they went on the principle laid down by the noble Lord they would reach a state of things absolutely unworkable in practice. He would draw this further conclusion. Non-provided schools in this country were possible under existing Acts of Parliament only because the majority of the people did not want that type, and when they were told that those who supported non-provided schools were paying twice over, he would point out that while in a sense that was true, they were not only paying for the particular kind of religion they wanted, but they were supporting another type which must be there if they were to have their own type at all. If everybody got their own type, the whole scheme would break down. It was a fact that more than half the country were content to do with a form of elementary education which did not foster their own religious societies. By that means only was the continued existence of non-provided schools constitutionally and financially possible. He did not say that the non-provided schools were to be treated unfairly, or that they were not to take cognisance of the fact that Roman

Catholics and a large section of Anglicans demanded special treatment. But he submitted to the House that the principle of the council school supported and managed by all, with no form of teaching within it which actually fostered the interests of any particular society, must be the dominant type, and when that was accepted as the dominant type, as it would be under the Government Bill, then and then only were they in a proper position to deal generously and considerately with those who for conscientious reasons, which they all respected, were unable to take full part in a workable national system of education. If that was the case it was only fair to submit to the House that the question of contracting out was not the essence of the Bill, but was really one of the suggested means of dealing with the exceptions that ought not to be ignored, but which could only be dealt with so long as they were exceptions. The noble Lord, the Member for Chorley, had devoted many hours of his valuable life to searching in the columns of *Hansard* for anything said on the Government side of the House in regard to contracting out. And so zealous was he in his sport that not content with hunting up the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, he even condescended to such small game as himself, and discovered a phrase in which he had said that that which would be a tonic in a few cases might well be poisonous if applied to the whole body politic. He adhered to that. But under this Bill, when the first condition was that there should be a council school within the reach of every child, it could not be possible that contracting out should become universal. It was not denied that contracting out in single-school areas would be impossible under the Bill. But while no one had affection for contracting out, while denominationalism was the ideal of a section of the community, contracting out was absolutely necessary to some extent in any scheme which any Government could proffer. Even in the elaborate provisions of the Bill of 1906, which he supported, there was a loop-hole by which contracting out might be applied. He repeated that contracting out was the inevitable safety valve, but the less extensive it was the better it would be for the education of the country. Lastly, he supported the Bill most heartily because of the provision with regard to the single school area. Complaint had been made of the term "single school area" because it led to confusion with the area of the parish. He would not dispute with the noble Lord's dialectic. They all knew what they meant by a single school area. They all knew that there were parts of the country in which the child had not got a reasonable choice of school. They all knew that that applied to nearly the whole of rural England. Where the child had not got reasonable choice of school on every ground of fair play, religious equality, and educational efficiency, they must have some provision like that set out in the Bill. It was suggested by the noble and learned Member that cases like those mentioned by the hon. Member for Louth, where Nonconformists were in a majority, could be dealt with under the principle of the rights of parents. How could that be? Take any Lincolnshire village where there might be 120 Nonconformists and forty Anglicans. Were they going to have one head teacher for two years and another for the third year? That reminded him of Canning's rhyme—

> "When each fair burgh numerically free,
> Shall choose its members by the Rule of
> Three."

Were they going to divide the small school staff by some fractional adaptation of that principle? The Nonconformist minority in a village could not be dealt with under the principle of the rights of parents. This was impossible. It could not be done in single school areas. The only way in which the village problem could be solved was not by putting first the special religious opinions of the people in the village, but by considering the village as a local government unit and the whole village being given the power to manage and control it. If there was nothing in this Bill but the abolition of the dual system in villages of rural England it would be well worth fighting for. They had been told by those who should have known better that there was nothing in this Bill to advance the interests of education. He wondered why anyone who had had experience of rural administration could fail to see that the abolition of the dual system was the first step towards helping the educational needs of those villages which had longed for help and never had it adequately up to the present time. All parties in the House regretted the rural exodus to the towns, and were longing to get more people back to the land. One of the many reasons why parents left the villages for the towns was because they could get a better education for their children. There would never be the education in the villages there ought to be when they were cramped and hampered at every turn by the absurdities and anomalies of the dual system. On the county council of which he was a member a most undue proportion of the time of the education committee was taken up with the eternal adjustment between the powers of the committee and rights of managers and proprietor in the necessary educational usage of the school buildings, and until the whole of the schools in a single-school area were directly under the local authority, they would find money and temper wasted, when they needed them all for the development of education. The great difficulty of rural education was that the number of school children was so small that they could not be properly graded by one or two teachers. The remedy was to have an infant school in every small village and schools for older boys and girls in central villages only. So long as the school buildings were owned by private people and the teacher was appointed by these people, they could not enlarge or reduce the school or combine schools or remove teachers. He hoped he had said nothing that would embitter this controversy, but he desired to support the Government, which proposed to bring to an end the greatest possible obstacle to the educational efficiency of the country. They were told there was a prospect of compromise and conciliation. It was surely possible for everyone who held that the universal system of council schools was essential to hold no less strongly that every effort ought to be made to treat with generosity those unable to come into it, and they ought to be open to any kind of suggestion by which variety might be given in urban districts where possible without destroying national machinery. While there was a tendency to seek a solution of this question by mutual accommodation, he could well understand the desire of some politicians of high degree and some small ones of no importance to keep up the policy of the open sore, and give a new barb to criticism. But he trusted that that temptation would be put away and that in proportion to the extreme difficulties of this most vital question they should all take extreme efforts to bring it to an end.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said that everyone must recognise and be grateful for the conciliatory tone of the last speaker. He only regretted that that conciliatory spirit was not shown by Members on both sides of the House in the early stages of these debates. In listening to the discussion he had been struck by its unreality. It had ranged round ill-defined battlecries, which were used on both sides of the House, but with a different understanding of their meaning. The ear had become accustomed to the expressions "no tests for teachers," "public control," "simple Bible teaching," or "Cowper-Temple teaching." With regard to "tests for teachers" he accepted it ten years ago, and was denounced for doing so. There were to be, it was said, no tests for teachers, and yet the hon. Member for Louth offered Catholics, as an inducement to enter the national educational system, an assurance that every local authority in England would put a test to the teachers for the Catholic schools. Yet the hon. Member used this extraordinary expression—

"He regretted that Catholics could not see their way to come into the national system."

That was exactly what Catholics wanted to do. They had always desired to come into the national system so long as their schools would not be destroyed as Catholic schools. The hon. Member said that no local authority in England would dream of appointing a non-Catholic teacher to Catholic schools. If that was so, why should not the Bill itself give that assurance? It was hard for Catholic representatives to have patience with the strange misinterpretation put upon their attitude by organs of public opinion. Only that morning he read in a great English Nonconformist paper a statement that in any settlement the Roman Catholics and Jews must have separate treatment and that exclusion from public control was a privilege they must expect to pay for. Catholics had not asked for freedom from public control. On the contrary, they welcomed public control, so long as it still left their schools Catholic schools. They were willing under the Bill of 1906 to come into a national system on condition that the assurance given by the hon. Member for Louth was made a reality.

AN HON. MEMBER: That floored the Bill.

MR. DILLON said it was not that that floored the Bill. It was the action of the narrow and foolish extremists on the Nonconformist side who committed the same offence—and would be sorry for it—which the Conservative Party committed in 1902. The extremists thought they could have it all their own way. Extremists on neither side could have things all their own way, and that they would learn before they had finished with the question. The proposals of the Catholics did not floor the Bill, because they were accepted by the Government. Throughout the whole controversy the Catholics, for whom Nationalist Members were entitled to speak, had desired conciliation, and had been anxious to meet whatever Government was in power to the fullest extent their principles would allow, and to make large concessions for the sake of a permanent settlement. They had always been against contracting out because it would mean a poorer class of schools, and because their schools would be deprived of the incalculable benefit of being part and parcel of the great national machinery. With regard to the Bill of 1906 he declared at the time that its author would have his revenge, and his prophecy was coming true. That Bill was a great constructive measure which aroused the enthusiasm of the country on its educational side. Could anyone say that the present Bill was from the educational point of view worthy of being mentioned in the same breath? The Liberal Party had come fresh from the country, with a new mandate to carry such a measure as the Bill of 1906. Catholics made great concessions, and the Bill was finally sent to the House of Lords with a majority of 320. It was an ideal question on which to fight and quarrel with the House of Lords. Why was not the Bill sent back to the House of Lords in the following session? It was an interesting question. The Government selected rather to fight the House of Lords on a Scottish Land Bill. Why was not the Bill of 1906 sent back to the Lords? It was because the extreme men in the Liberal Party said they would have no more of it, and that too much had been conceded. Did not they now think it was a mistake? Did not they think it would have been better to force through the Bill of 1906? The Bill of 1906 might have been forced through and sent to the House of Lords at the beginning of 1907. He thought they would learn before they were done with this education question that they had made a great mistake in not fighting the battle on that. Therefore it was absurd to charge Catholics with refusing public control. They desired public control, and they had not refused to go into the national system. They wanted to go into the national system if it was only made possible for them. It could be made possible. It had been proved in this House that the problem could be successfully solved so far as the Catholics were concerned. An hon. Member speaking upon the matter the previous night had recounted the efforts which had been made and rejected. Amongst others he said that they had asked for contracting out and that when that was brought forward they rejected it. He replied that they never asked for contracting out and that as a matter of settlement they had always refused it. So far as Catholics were concerned and the people for whom the Nationalist Members spoke in this country, they objected to the principle of contracting out. They objected because, even if the grant were increased, they had no ground for hoping that it would be increased to such an extent as to put them upon a position of equality with other schools in the country, and they knew that whatever increase was given to Catholics, in educational progress they would be left far behind indeed. Another matter had been alluded to; namely, the question of parents' rights. He had the honour to be the father of that in modern times. He invented that principle, and brought down on his head attacks, in those days, from nearly the whole House. But that principle had now become very popular on the Opposition side of the House. He was greatly amused on reading the other day a speech of the Archbishop of Canterbury—a very interesting and remarkable speech which he delivered upon the introduction of the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill. The Archbishop quoted from declarations made by Liberals during the election of 1905 and also in 1900 vindicating the principle of parents' rights. It was a most extraordinary thing that once a Party crossed the floor of the House they seemed to forget the principle of parents' rights altogether. It was a principle only cherished in opposition and not when the Party were in power. In his opinion the time to have settled the whole question on a permanent and lasting basis was in 1902. In that year the Government had a great majority and the question could have been settled. If the Government of the day had shown anything approaching the spirit of compromise which Members were now so anxious to show, a settlement might have been effected which would have safeguarded every possible right or claim of the voluntary schools. It would have been a lasting settlement such as that of 1870, and would have lasted probably another thirty years. But that great opportunity was thrown away. Another opportunity was thrown away in 1906 in his opinion, when the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman who was now Chief Secretary for Ireland was not sent to the House of Lords a second time, and he was greatly afraid that another opportunity would be thrown away upon the present occasion. The realities of the education question had now passed away from that House, they all knew what was going on behind the scenes, and that there were negotiations in progress. The Irish Members knew nothing about the negotiations except what they saw in the newspapers, and, therefore, as the hon. Member for Waterford said, they had looked forward to this debate with great interest for some glimmer of hope. But up to the present they had seen none. A great deal had been said about the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill, and it was an extraordinary piece of logical legerdemain that the First Lord of the Admiralty in his speech undertook to prove to them that the principle of contracting out, especially for the Catholic schools, was contained in the Bishop's Bill. What he said was that the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill, as explained by the Bishop himself, contained that principle, but there was not a word about it in the Bill. It was a Protestant settlement that was proposed. Here was what occurred in the speech of the Bishop of St. Asaph—

> "One matter I desire to refer to briefly, but with all the emphasis I can command. The Church of England will never accept a settlement which does not include an agreement which will meet generously, as they deserve to be met, the claims of the Roman Catholics."

But they wanted to know how they deserved to be met. In this Bill there was no comfort at all for them; all the comfort they got was in the explanation of the Bill. So far as the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill was concerned they did not seem to come in at all. They found themselves without any glimmer of light coming from the pronouncements of the Government. All he could find was this. The First Lord of the Admiralty used a very strange expression which rather appeared to him to bear out the statement made by the President of the Board of Trade in Lancashire. He said—

> "Up to the present it was not open to the Government to deal with various religious denominations otherwise than on a footing of perfect equality. But when a Bill was introduced by the Bishop of St. Asaph's the Government feel more at liberty to act with regard to certain denominations for whom alone the alternative of contracting out would have to be retained."

That was not a very hopeful prospect, he must confess, particularly after the speech they had heard that day from the Member for Manchester, and from other Gentlemen before him, and from influential men outside the House. He was very sceptical as to the possibility of the Government's passing a special measure for Catholics apart from

Anglicans. And, also, there was no indication in the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty of any determination to put them on a footing of equality, and no indication of improvement in the grant. As he had said, he objected to the whole principle of contracting-out. But if there was to be force put upon them, let it be clearly understood that they could not for one moment assent to the principle laid down in the *Daily News* to-day, that it was a privilege for which they were bound to pay. They did not want to contract out, but if they were to be put out, then they must be put on a footing of equality, and hon. Members opposite should see that the poor children of the Roman Catholics of this country were not condemned to an inferior system of education. That was a point he wished strongly to impress upon his fellow-countrymen as well as upon Members of this House. The majority of Members opposite were, he thought, thoroughly sympathetic. Their feeling was, and he thought it was a natural feeling, that there was the greatest possible danger of what might be described as a Protestant settlement leaving the Catholics out altogether. He had always felt—he did not want in the least degree to be offensive to hon. Members above the gangway—that the majority of the Protestants of this country were to a large extent content with an agreement based upon Cowper-Temple teaching. That would be fatal to Catholics. He had been immensely struck by two letters which appeared in *The Times*, one from the Bishop of Chichester, in which he said that Churchmen should remember that while they claimed to be treated on an equality with Roman Catholics, they were bound to take a wider view of the education question. He wrote—

> "We belong, not to a sect, but to the Church of the nation and must do our utmost not only to secure Church education for Church children, but Christian education for all children whose parents will allow them to receive it."

That was the point he wished to dwell upon, and it was backed up by another letter from the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Cambridge—

> "The short letter of the Bishop of Chichester represents exactly, I believe, the views of the silent majority of the Churchmen as against the well-organised minority who wish to turn the Church of England into a pseudo-Catholic sect, supported as they are at this moment by some Evangelicals who are Tories first and Churchmen afterwards."

If that were true, and if the great silent majority of the people of England were more concerned in maintaining in the schools of this country—in all the schools—that simple Bible teaching as they called it, then it was natural that Catholics should feel alarm lest what he described as a Protestant settlement should be arrived at, leaving them entirely out in the cold. He had never been in the habit of using language such as was adopted in the great debates of 1906 when the system of Cowper-Temple teaching was called a new religion and was eventually termed "Birreligion" and had various other terms of opprobrium applied to it. He felt no sympathy with that line of conduct. All through those debates in 1906, and even to some extent in the debates to-day, there kept running through his mind the two lines of Lever—

> "Fightin' like divils for conciliation,
> An' hatin' each other for love of God."

In this controversy the question of Cowper-Temple teaching had taken an entirely new aspect. He had pointed out that Cowper-Temple teaching was not a definite thing, that it was a form of religion which was accepted by the opinion of this country, and that it was intensely unacceptable to Catholics, so unacceptable that they would prefer the secular system. They pointed out that under the Cowper-Temple teaching they could teach almost any religion, and therefore it was a vague and indefinite thing. So strongly, apparently, did this argument influence the Government that they dropped the whole Cowper-Temple system and introduced a totally new thing in the present Bill. Now there must be an undertaking to provide religious instruction such as was specified in the London County Council Syllabus. This was substituted for Cowper-Temple teaching. They had now got a syllabus. They were progressing. They undertook to do away with the Cowper-Temple system and to have various Syllabuses. They were trying to do what the Councils of the Catholic Church had been endeavouring to do for 900 years, and had not yet finished—to define all the articles of faith. It took a good deal of time, and a good deal of learning, but it was dealt with offhand by the London County Council. The *Daily News* that morning described, in the most enthusiastic language, as the future of the country under this new Bill if it was accepted—

> "A council school in every parish in which undogmatic Christianity is taught."

There was no such thing as undogmatic Christianity; it was an impossibility. In the very forefront of this syllabus, which was full of dogma from one end to the other, it was stated that they were to teach the life of our Lord. And at the end was this extraordinary "Note."—

> "It was found that the syllabus of Jewish instruction was unacceptable to the Jewish children in certain schools of London."

It was too dogmatic for the Jews, although there was no dogma in it at all. What did the County Council do in this syllabus which was now returned to Parliament to guide all the council schools of the country under the new Act? It agreed that there should be a separate syllabus dogmatically prepared to suit the Jewish children, which might be taken up as an alternative syllabus to that for the Christian children. That was undogmatic religion under the new County Council's syllabus. They had no syllabus for the Catholic children. That would be beyond even the limit of the County Council. But really was it not pitiable? In all the schools of the country they were going to have this form of religious teaching endowed and they were going to penalise all the children of the country who required some other form of religion. Let him say, once more assuming the rôle of a prophet, that he was convinced more deeply than he could find words to express his conviction, that no Bill would ever be accepted or pass through Parliament—and even if it were passed by some impossible process, it would be very speedily repealed by the country—which endowed one form of religious teaching and penalised all the parents of the country who required some other form.

*MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough) said he had listened patiently to the speeches which had been made, as he had listened two years ago to what seemed to be the interminable discussion as to how much of doctrine and dogma was to be taught in the national elementary schools, and he had come to the conclusion that it was very difficult, if not impossible for one who held the views he held, and he held them very strongly, to record his vote in favour of the Second Reading of the Bill, although he did not intend to vote against it. For many years he had been profoundly impressed with the conviction that there was only one settlement of the question which could possibly be permanent and which was just, and by which they could avoid doing a great amount of injustice to a large number of their fellow citizens, and that was a settlement which must be based upon State neutrality, upon their common citizenship—the settlement commonly known as the secular solution, not the secularist solution as it had been called on the other side of the House—he thought through inadvertence. But outside the House, simply to arouse prejudice and for purposes of misrepresentation, it was very often described as the secularist solution. One might just as well talk of the secular clergy as the secularist clergy. There was a great distinction, as everybody knew, between the two words. It was admitted that the secular was the only logical solution. He had observed that hon. Members when they wanted to disparage and pour contempt upon this solution always began by saying it was the only logical solution and went on with a fine smile of contempt to say that logic could not be expected in politics. He entirely agreed with that. He had lived long enough to know that it was considered by many as the mark of the higher statesmanship to be as illogical as possible and to call it compromise. Therefore, he would be the last to put this solution before the House on the ground of logic. But he put it before the House on the ground of justice, and of justice alone. He thought this solution was a necessary corollary of making education compulsory. He would appeal to passive resisters in the House. They were bound to support the secular solution. For what principle had they been fighting? The passive resister might say he was fighting for no principle at all, but merely for his own hand. He objected very much to paying for Catholic teaching or Anglican teaching, but so long as he could procure Cowper-Temple teaching he was perfectly satisfied, and if someone else's conscience was offended what was that to him? But a passive resister who said that would put himself beyond the pale of argument. He believed the passive resister was a sensible and an honest man, and the principle for which he had been contending could only be that no man ought to be compelled by law to pay for any religious teaching to which he was conscientiously opposed. That ought to be the fundamental principle of our educational system, and it led at once to this solution of State neutrality, because there were thousands in this country who entertained a conscientious objection to Cowper-Temple teaching. To Catholics, as the hon. Member for Waterford had told them, it was abhorrent. As the hon. Member for Mayo had said, they preferred the secular solution. But there were many others who intensely disliked it, and how could it be just to compel them, by law, to pay for it? He might answer in passing a very superficial objection that some people conscientiously objected to pay income-tax. He could answer that in words published more than thirty years ago in a passionate argument for the secular solution in a work which he held in his hand, viz., "The Struggle for National Education," by Mr. John Morley. He said, contemptuously, in answer to that—

> "As if it were not in religious affairs a settled principle of our Government that the majority, however great it may be, and however strenuous its convictions, shall still not force the conscience of the minority."

But then what might be taught? It had been held under Cowper-Temple teaching that the Apostle's Creed might be taught. He had mentioned this recently in speaking at a Congregational Church, and the minister when he came to speak said he did not know that he could say he believed in one single word of the Apostle's Creed. That remark was indicative of the signs of the times. He found other examples in the syllabus. He was taught at school as history of divine inspiration that the walls of Jericho fell down at the sound of the trumpets of Joshua, and that the sun and moon stood still in order that the Israelites might complete the slaughter of their enemies, and that when the prophet Elisha was going up, it did not matter where, when he was assailed by some little children on account of a certain physical infirmity which was shared by a great many of them, he cursed them in the name of the Lord, and Providence sent out she bears which tore many of them. Here he had the authority of a Canon of the Church, and a Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford and editor of the Encyclopædia Biblica, and it was tidings of great joy when he was no longer compelled in any sense of the word to look upon that as history of divine inspiration. But they were going to ask the teachers to teach these things as divinely inspired truth. It was ridiculous to say that this did not operate as a test for teachers if they asked them to give lessons even in Cowper-Temple teaching. And if they only permitted teachers to give such instruction there would be preferential treatment for those who would do so. But more than that, no man could give that teaching unless he believed in it or unless he was a hypocrite. He admitted that they were not going to ask the teachers to subscribe to a formal or written test, but the things he had mentioned must operate as tests, and if they were going to carry out the doctrine that they were not going to have tests for teachers, they must make up their minds that the teacher must not be allowed to give religious teaching. Considering that the State levied rates and taxes from all the citizens without inquiring what their religious belief was, he contended that the modern State ought not to exert its power to take from the pockets of all its citizens money to uphold religious teaching to which some of those who were forced to contribute conscientiously objected. They did not object to religion, but to State-paid religion. That opinion was not merely the opinion of Secularists, it was what was said years ago in the debates by the old Nonconformist leaders, and perhaps the House would pardon him if he made one short quotation from a speech delivered in 1870, by Mr. Henry

Richard, a man who was deservedly held in the highest estimation in that House. He said—

> "As a Nonconformist, he had *in limine* an insurmountable objection to such a scheme; if he knew anything of the principles of Nonconformity, one of the most fundamental and universally acknowledged of them was this, that it was not right to take money received from the general taxation of the public and apply it to purposes of religious instruction and worship. That principle appeared to him to lie at the very foundation of all religious liberty. For if they claimed the right to compel one man to pay for the support of another man's religion and to enforce that, as they must, by penalties of the law, they passed at once into the region of religious persecution."

Those were the words of a man who understood his own mind and was not afraid to express it, and he often wondered what Erastian germ had insinuated itself into the vertebræ of the present day leaders of Nonconformity that they walked with such uncertain steps where their forefathers so strongly trod. In 1870 in a letter to John Bright, Mr. Gladstone said—

> "The fact is, it seems to me, that the Nonconformists have not yet as a body made up their minds whether they want unsectarian religion or simply secular teaching, so far as the application of the rate is concerned. I have never been strong against the latter of these two. It seems to me impartial and not, if fairly worked in any degree unfriendly to religion."

He could give the House if it were necessary another extract from Mr. Gladstone in 1870 to the same effect. Therefore, Mr. Gladstone had no apprehension in regard to the secular solution, and he did not think it was necessarily an irreligious system. He could also quote the words of the late Prime Minister, whose loss they all so sincerely deplored, and whose memory they would ever cherish. He could quote his words showing that, in his opinion, nine-tenths of the Liberals, if they had their own way, would ask for the secular solution. The book written by the Secretary for India upon this subject was as full of arguments in favour of this solution as an egg was full of meat. Then there was the extremely interesting speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, to which he had listened in 1906, and who said—

> "There are only two means of settling this question, one is that the State should pay for no religious teaching, and the other is that the State should pay for all religious teaching."

The right hon. Gentleman also said that in his belief the second means was impracticable, and therefore he had always given his support to the first. Of course all that was entirely compatible with giving ample facilities to all denominations out of school hours at their own expense. Something had been said as to the rights of parents, and they all recognised those rights. Undoubtedly a parent had the right to have his child brought up in the religion and faith which he believed to be true. He had also the right to say that his child should not be taught in any public school any form of religion which he thought was untrue. The parent, however, had no right to come to the State and say: "I insist on you teaching my child at the State's expense any religion that I choose." If they admitted that they could not draw the line anywhere. They would have to allow ethical societies and other sects the same right with the result that the whole thing would become a theological tug-of-war. They had no right to dictate to the State the manner in which the State should apply the funds taken indiscriminately from all ratepayers. All other attempts at the solution of this question had been dismal failures, and he asked the House to consider whether they might not arrive at a solution of this question upon the common ground of citizenship. Mr. John Morley, in his work on "Compromise," said—

> "The so-called settlement of national education [in 1870] is the most recent and the most deplorable illustration of refusing to examine ideas alleged to be impracticable."

It was said that if they advocated this solution, none of them would come back again to the House of Commons. He was not greatly impressed with that argument. If this question was boldly faced and put before the constituencies with sincerity; if they put forward their strong conviction that only in this way could they avoid doing great injustice to a great number of their fellow citizens; he believed the country would approve of it. He had done his best to put before his own constituency the justice of the solution he was advocating. All his life he had found himself very much with minorities, but he had lived to find those minorities not unfrequently turned into majorities. If one was sincerely convinced of any proposal of this kind in regard to its justice, all one could do was to labour for it and rest content believing—

> "That they are slaves who would not be
> In the right with two or three."

*LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) said the hon. Member who had just spoken would not hear from him any objection to his remarks on the score that advocacy was likely to lead him into electoral difficulties, but when he claimed that his solution was the only just one, then he was bound to say that he joined issue with him. What was the great point of his argument? It was to the effect that it was unfair that one set of people should have their children taught completely at the public expense, while another set of children were not so taught. If his solution were adopted the injustice would still remain. The children of the secularists and those who did not desire any religious teaching would receive from the State the full cost of the religious education of their children. An enormous proportion of the people of this country consisted of those who regarded religion not as a part of secular education, but as the foundation on which secular education should rest. They were to be put in the position of having to pay themselves for that foundation. They would not be treated with that absolute equality which the hon. Member desired. The truth was that they could not arrive at any system which was absolutely equal and just except a system which declared that as soon as the State had compelled all children to be sent to the public elementary schools it was bound to give that form of education which was conscientiously insisted on by the parents of all the children. That was the ideal, but whether they could reach it was a different question, and the hon. Gentleman did not get rid of the difficulty when he said, "If you teach no religion you are acting fairly," because by so doing they would be giving a preference to those who desired no religion at all. He said quite frankly that he saw more prospect of a settlement of this question on the lines the hon. Gentleman suggested than he did on the lines suggested by the hon. Member for the Middleton Division. The hon. Member for the Middleton Division had always been quite frank and clear in his advocacy of the solution which he had suggested. The hon. Gentleman said there was a form of religious teaching which all should accept. That was the undenominational system; that was to be the predominant teaching in the schools of the country.

MR. ADKINS: I spoke of the predominant type of school as being under full public control. It was the character of the school government on which I laid stress.

*LORD R. CECIL said he was under complete misapprehension of what the hon. Gentleman said. If he only meant that all the schools ought to be of one type and under the control of the local education authority with reference to the appointment of managers and things of that kind, and that the religious teaching should be under the control of the managers, that would be a proposal coming very near what had been frequently advocated in this House. The hon. Gentleman must mean that the education was to be under the control of the local education authority, and be of the Cowper-Temple kind. If the hon. Gentleman did not mean that, he did not know what he meant. He was perfectly accurate when he said that the hon. Gentleman desired that Cowper-Temple teaching should be predominant throughout all the schools. If the hon. Gentleman listened to the hon. Member for East Mayo and the hon. Member for Peterborough, he must have felt that his solution was impossible. That was what he wanted to impress on hon. Members opposite. They could not force undenominational teaching as the predominant and universal teaching in the schools of this country. He left out the people of the unhappy English Church; they, he knew, were not regarded as entitled to much consideration. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh!"] He would be able to show before he sat down that that was the view held in some quarters. The Roman Catholics and the secularists were two sections of the community who said they would not submit to have that form of religious teaching imposed on their children; they said they did not believe in it, and that they did not think it satisfactory. It seemed to him absolutely impossible for the Liberal Party, who had always gone in for religious equality, in the face of that refusal to adopt such a system as that advocated by the hon. Member for the Middleton Division. There was one observation made by the hon. Member for East Mayo with which he heartily agreed. The hon. Gentleman complained very much of the unreality of this discussion. He himself did not quite know what they were discussing. He had not the slightest conception why it was that the Government desired to continue it. Only two points had emerged clearly from the discussion so far as it had gone. The first was that practically no one was in favour of the Government proposals. He was not very sure about the hon. Member for the Middleton Division of Lancashire, and the hon. Member for the Osgoldcross Division of Yorkshire. With these exceptions there was no one who had taken part in the debate who had not condemned one or other of the principal proposals of the Bill. The second thing which had emerged in the debate was that no one really knew what the Government proposed to do. It was very remarkable when the House of Commons were discussing the Second Reading of one of the principal measures of the Government programme. A few weeks ago they thought that they knew what the policy of the Government was. It appeared to have had two periods. There was first what might be called the sword period, which was begun with the celebrated speech at Pontypool by the First Lord of the Admiralty, and the natural outcome of that was the Bill now before the House. That was the sword Bill. It was designed to be of a very ruthless character. He was dealing now with the denominational aspect of the question. It was the kind of Bill they expected when they read the right hon. Gentleman's speech and other speeches that followed. Let the House consider what this Bill really proposed to do. He would not repeat the arguments which had been stated as to the effect of the Bill on town denominational schools. It gave them the alternative of inefficiency or extinction. There was no doubt about that. As to country schools its proceedings were even more drastic. It proposed their abolition, coupled with the confiscation of their buildings. The right hon. Gentleman had given a return of all the schools in the single school parishes, and distinguished those which were governed by what he called tight trusts. He found that there were 5,600 Church of England schools which were affected by tight trusts. It was very noticeable that there were only 118 affected by tight trusts which did not belong to the Church of England. It was proposed by this Bill to take without any payment whatever the buildings belonging to those schools and the land on which they were built. It was a very moderate estimate to say that the amount of confiscation in hard cash would be £5,000,000. How was this proposed to be justified? By the grant of so-called facilities. That was to say the schools were to be placed at the disposal of the former owners before and after school hours with a prohibition against any regular teacher entering into a school and taking part in the religious education then given. Everybody admitted that facilities of that description were absolutely ridiculous. The only other proposal was that the trustees should be entitled before the confiscation of their schools to insist on teaching in accordance with the London County Council syllabus. Beyond securing just the fact that there must be some dogmatic teaching that syllabus secured nothing at all. It was absolutely no security either for moderate teaching or for extreme teaching or for any teaching which could be called even Christian by most of those who sat beside him; therefore, to flourish the London County Council syllabus in their faces as some compensation for the confiscation of the Church schools and buildings throughout the country was really a piece of political window-dressing which it was difficult to describe with patience. That was the sword period. But recently there had been a different atmosphere. They had heard a great deal of conciliation, and a different tone seemed to have pervaded Ministerial speeches.

He had been rather interested to read the causes to which that change of tone had been assigned. In part of the Press which supported the Government it was attributed to the support given by the bishops and archbishops to the Licensing Bill. He did not pretend to understand the workings of the consciences of hon. Gentlemen opposite, but it appeared to him to be a most astounding proposition that because the bishops and archbishops took a view which was more creditable to their hearts than to their heads about another wholly different measure, therefore the Government ought to alter proposals which at any rate it was assumed they had made as those which would properly solve, with due regard to justice and efficiency, the great educational problems of this country. They had heard a great deal about the bishops. He would be the last person in the House to speak with disrespect of the bishops of the Church of England, but he thought somewhat undue importance had been given to certain statements made by some bishops. A bishop and a Member of the House of Lords had his own view about education and the settlement of the education question; but so far as he knew, this Bill had received very small support indeed from any section. He had heard it said that the Archbishop had supported the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill, but he thought it could only be said by those who had not read the Archbishop's speech. It was not for him to say in regard to everything he said that it was right or wrong, but it was perfectly clear that a Bill on the lines of the Bishop of St. Asaph's proposals was not satisfactory to those for whom he professed to be entitled to speak. But there was another circumstance than the action of the Bishops on the Licensing Bill which possibly had had its effect in altering the views of the Government. They had heard of bye-elections. In one after another of these bye-elections which had occurred in England and Wales the Government had either lost the seat or retained it by a very much reduced majority. He thought it had dawned upon them that the meaning of these bye-elections was that their educational policy, coupled with other parts of their policy, was not viewed with favour. He did not complain of the altered attitude of the Government. He thought it was perfectly legitimate for a Liberal Government or any other Government, to change their attitude. They were not bound to proceed on a line of policy of which the country evidently disapproved. He agreed that it was legitimate for a Government to say that the bye-elections showed that the country disapproved of their policy. But he wished they would go further and tell the House why it was that the country disapproved of their policy. He thought the reason was that it was a highly sectarian administration. That was the real defect of the Government. They had never, in dealing with the education question, tried to deal with it on terms that were fair and just to all sections. They had fixed their eyes too exclusively on the amount of Nonconformist support they could secure from their representatives in the House; and they had attempted to construct an educational settlement which would be satisfactory to that very limited section of opinion. He observed that when he said that the Bill was designed out of hostility to the Church of England there were protests from the other side. He remembered making a like observation about the Bill of 1906 and it was received with similar protests. But he had since received very remarkable confirmation of his view. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in October last went down to South Wales and found that some of his supporters were dissatisfied with the attitude he had taken with reference to Welsh disestablishment, and he was asked to explain the attitude he had taken up. In defending himself the right hon. Gentleman said—

"What is the very first great measure introduced by the Government in 1906? An Education Bill which constituted the greatest and most drastic measure of disestablishment and disendowment of a State Church ever proposed. Its effect would be"—

these were his words—

"to disestablish 13,000 Church mission rooms which 2,500,000 children are largely forced by law to attend; to take away from these denominational seminaries under clerical control without compensation national endowments aggregating £7,000,000 and upwards. That measure was"—

he went on to say, more picturesquely than accurately—

"thrown out by the House of Lords"—

and he drew the attention of the House to this phrase—

"and next year the Government would bring in another disestablishment Bill to deal with the same problem."

Now, that was the fundamental defect of the Government policy. They had attempted to use, more particularly in this Bill, the educational question in order to strike a blow at the Church of England; and as long as they pursued that policy he was convinced that it was doomed to failure. They were told that that policy had been altered, and they asked what was the Government's alternative to the Bill. He hoped that the Prime Minister would shortly favour them with an answer. A great deal had been heard of critical comparisons between the nature of this Bill and that of the Bishop of St. Asaph. Were the Government prepared to adopt the Bill of the Bishop of St. Asaph? Were they prepared to adopt the view of the Liberal Churchman who spoke the previous evening? Were they going to adopt the policy of the Archbishop of Canterbury? What was the policy of the Government? Before they were asked to vote for the Second Reading of this Bill they were entitled to know what were the Government's intentions. What did the Government say in answer to that question? They seemed to have adopted a novel means of meeting that kind of difficulty. Not long ago they had a debate on Home Rule, and the Chief Secretary for Ireland, being hard pressed, turned to the Irish Members and asked: "What do you propose? What is it you want?" He himself thought that that was not a very successful proceeding at the time.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): Hear, hear.

*LORD R. CECIL said he was therefore the more surprised that it had been practically repeated on the present occasion. What was the attitude of the Government in this matter? They said "What does the Opposition want?" The question, however, was "What does the Government think they want?" The attitude of the Opposition was simple and well-known. He said that with perfect confidence. It was expressed by the hon. Member for Walton. They had always contended that they could only settle this question by treating everybody with absolute justice. They had always said that in 1906, and the Church of England had said it as early as 1896. They contended in perfectly unmistakable terms that the only way was by admitting the principle that the parents were the people who had the right to settle the kind of education that was to be given to their children. That was the principle always urged from those benches. [MINISTERIAL ironical cries of "Oh!"] He was talking of this Parliament. [Renewed MINISTERIAL ironical cries of "Oh!"] It had always been urged right through the debates in 1906. It was a principle admitted by the late Prime Minister, to which assent had been given by a president of the Free Churches, and to which the Chief Secretary for Ireland had expressed more than once his adherence. He could not conceive of any Nonconformist objection to it. He maintained that no man had ever contested the justice of it. No one could say that it would be an unjust or an improper settlement. The hon. Member who spoke last said that it was logical. The hon. Member for North Camberwell had expressed in the strongest possible words his adhesion to the view that it was logical but impracticable. So said the hon. Member for Middleton. But he could not in the least understand why he put aside, in a lofty way, the fact that it had been in operation in our workhouses, in our Poor Law schools, in our industrial schools, in Germany, in Ireland, and in a number of other countries. He put all that aside as irrelevant and absurd, and said that it was impracticable if there were three or four different Nonconformist sections demanding their own set of teachers to teach the full doctrines which they held. It might fairly be answered to that argument that the Nonconformists were satisfied with Cowper-Temple teaching and that they asked for nothing more. They had said so over and over again. How, then, could they turn round and say "We shall each of us require a separate form of religious instruction suitable to our respective sections?" So far as he was concerned he and his friends withdrew nothing they had said during the last five years. There would be no difficulty in a great majority of cases of providing separate schools and separate teachers, and separate treatment for their children. He was convinced that that was the ideal they should aim at and that they should not force a child in the country into a common Christianity. They should look at the form of teaching which the parents desired, and it was only by a policy of that kind that they could assuage the religious strife they all so much deplored.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): The noble and learned Lord who has just sat down always speaks with great force in our educational discussions. I think, however, he was not present during the debates in 1902, when many of the schemes he now advocates were put forward from the Opposition side of the House, and discarded by the Government which was then in power. I observe he says "We have always urged the claim of the parent to have his child educated in the faith he desires." Who did he mean when he said "we"? The Government of 1902 declined to accept the proposal made by the hon. Member for Mayo which did provide for those very rights of the parent which the noble Lord now advocates. The noble Lord says, "We have always urged equality and justice in this matter," but the whole complaint made against the Act of 1902 is that it does not provide equality and justice. I wish to give as my authority for that statement no one on this side of the House, but the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire, who, speaking at Barnstaple, reiterated what we have so often heard here, the fact that the Nonconformist grievance has not been met by the Act of 1902. His words were—

> "I am quite ready to admit that the Act of 1902 did not remove all the grievances of which the Nonconformists may justly complain."

The noble and learned Lord, in suggesting that equality and justice had already been provided, has altogether forgotten what took place in 1902 and what has taken place since. I venture to say that there was no question more fully canvassed in the constituencies at the time of the last general election than the education question, and I will undertake to say that no single Liberal could have been returned to these benches who was not pledged to public control and no tests for teachers. We made an attempt in 1906 to deal with the problem. The criticism offered to our Bill from the Liberal side was that it gave away too much. Certainly, considering its career through the House of Lords, there probably was some reason for the belief that we did give away a great deal too much. That Bill had an absolutely unprecedented support. It went up to the House of Lords with a majority, I think, of over 300 behind it. Every Liberal Member, the whole Labour Party, the whole Irish Nationalist Party voted for it. In that Bill we gave as we thought our solution, and a very liberal solution, of this problem. When that Bill reached the House of Lords it was torn to pieces. Some of the most important principles were taken out of it or completely vitiated. The Lords interfered with the principle of local control and impaired popular control, they weakened the conscience clause, they did what was infinitely worse—they left the single-school areas absolutely under denominational control. Now we are met with a new situation. The noble Lord suggests that one reason why what he calls a spirit of conciliation is in the air is that we are influenced in some way by the action of the bishops on the Licensing Bill. We are no such thing. We take up the problem absolutely on its merits, though I am only too glad to have the support of a very large number of the bishops on the Licensing Bill. I think it does them credit. It shows that they, at all events, are not prepared to oppose a Bill merely because it happens to be proposed by a Liberal Government. The noble Lord suggested that the action of the bishops on the Licensing Bill is more creditable to their hearts than their heads. Does he consider it a mark of mental inferiority to express approval of a Bill with a high moral motive when it is proposed by a Liberal Government? So far as the action of the bishops on the Licensing Bill is concerned, it has in no way affected the attitude of the Government towards this problem, nor will it do so. The noble Lord also suggested that the bye-elections have induced an alteration in tone. There has been no alteration in tone. The policy of the Government remains what it was, and if right hon. Gentlemen opposite desire to know what that policy is they will find it is embodied in the Bill introduced by my right hon. friend. We have said from the first that the Bill contains the main principles to which we adhere—popular control, no tests for teachers, and it aims at freeing the single-school district from the domination of one sect. If it is possible within these limits to arrive at any adjustment, then we are prepared to accept Amendments which, while not vitiating the principle, will enable us to arrive at an accommodation. I understand there are people who think the contracting-out clause contains the main principle of the Bill. One of the objects of the Bill is to deal with single-school areas. Those who have any knowledge of rural life know full well what has been the pressure brought to bear on those who live in the villages, and it is all rubbish to say that the conscience clause provides a free outlet for those who have been subjected to this oppression. The case of the hardship of the single-school area has been admitted by very high authority, that of the right hon. Gentleman himself, the Leader of the Opposition, when he said in the discussions in 1902 that his Bill did not remove that hardship, that it was one of the difficulties of the existing system, and it would be one of the difficulties of the system that would be brought into being under his Bill. That is one of the objections we have to the existing system—that it does leave the hardship on the single-school areas. Turning to another side of the question, it is said that there is in this Bill some form of confiscation. Let me take the kinds of trusts dealt with in this Bill. There are the schools under limited trusts, those which are not limited, and schools which are privately owned. The noble Lord suggested that there are 9,600 schools under limited trusts in single-school areas which belong to the Church of England. Where does he get his figures from?

Lord R. CECIL: I have explained that my difficulty was very great owing to the form of the Government Return. I made them up from the Blue-book, but it is possible it is a few hundreds out.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: It is a mistake, not of hundreds, but of thousands. The information provided for me by the Board of Education shows that there are only 3,700 schools that come into this category in the single-school areas. Let us see how it is they are treated. In the case of schools under limited trusts the transfer is compulsory, but we are quite prepared to meet that difficulty. The difficulty we are met with is this—these schools have to be used for purely educational purposes, that is the express object provided for in their trusts. The local authority have to keep the schoolhouse in repair. In some cases it may be necessary for them to extend it. Let the House contemplate what complication and difficulty we should get into if we had not the control of the fabric. Indeed in many cases it would be a considerable relief to the managers to have that onus placed on the shoulders of the local authority. Then there is left to the denomination the use of the building on Saturdays and Sundays when they may use the school for the whole of the legitimate educational purposes of the Church. The other schools, under loose trusts, are not transferred compulsorily; privately-owned schools can only be transferred by agreement. Now what are the financial conditions of these transfers? I have referred to the limited trusts and to the loose trusts. In single-school areas, the school shall be transferred and the burden of keeping it in repair and extending it will fall on the local education authority. No rent will be paid for the school, because the local education authority will be carrying out the purpose of the trust. An undertaking will be given by the local education authority that such teaching as comes within the limits of the syllabus named in the Bill will be given regularly five days a week if demanded by the trustees. Facilities, real facilities and not illusory ones, will be given on five days a week, and on Saturdays and Sundays the whole use of the fabric. In the case of loose trusts——

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): How many of them are there?

MR. RUNCIMAN: It is very difficult to say, but I doubt if there are more than 295 Church of England schools. In them rent becomes a matter of bargain, and also, when the transfer is made, whether Cowper-Temple teaching shall be given. In the privately-owned schools—there are about 2,000 Church of England schools—rent becomes a matter of bargain, and also the question of Cowper-Temple teaching, and Saturday and Sunday facilities and facilities during the week. We provide in the case of the whole of these transfers for the whole of these very privileges which are said to solve the problem of the parents' rights. When we are asked to extend parents' rights beyond what is stated in this Bill I should like to know what those rights are. The inalienable rights of the parents have been largely referred to in these debates, and what I want to know is whether it is as the hon. Member for Walton asked—Does it mean that every parent is to secure for his child teaching in his own faith? Does it mean that every Methodist, every Churchman, every Unitarian, every Christian Scientist, every Jew, every Spiritualist is to have teaching for his child—special religious instruction—in every school he is pleased to send his child to?

AN HON. MEMBER: So far as is practical.

MR. RUNCIMAN: Oh, then the parents' right is to be not as a right but a matter of expediency. Who is to appoint the teacher? The hon. Member for Walton says that he is the apostle of this principle. ["No."] Then he is the last apostle. If we granted to every one of the religious denominations the right of the parent to special religious instruction for his child, to whatever school he sent it, this means the consideration of the point as to the teacher. Is this to apply to every school? That is another pertinent question. Is it to be applied by every child having a religious teacher of his own denomination in the school? The Bishop of Manchester says "No." Is it to be provided for by erecting an enormous number of small denominational schools—a proposal which is often made? No proposal that has ever been made could be more harmful to the educational system. Hon. Members familiar with Ireland know that one of the curses of Irish elementary education is the fact that in a very large number of towns in Ireland, especially in the north of Ireland, you have quite an uncommon number of little schools with thirty and forty children, which cannot be properly staffed and taught, which are vastly expensive, and which do not even solve the religious difficulty. We may ask, how many children are required to justify the demand of a separate teacher or a separate school? I understand that the limit is put at thirty. But why limit the number to thirty if it is the inalienable right of the parent? Is there to be no inalienable right for twenty-nine when there are are only twenty-nine children? If it is to be done by a separate teacher for each denomination, where is the supply of your teachers to come from? If teachers teach their own sect, why should not all have an equal privilege? Does it mean that the trusts are to be subordinated to the wishes of the parents? That question has produced several replies, sometimes from the same person. Apparently the inalienable right of the parent to have his child brought up in his own faith is a right to be exercised in his private capacity and at the expense of the State. We have never denied the right of any parent to bring up his child under what observances he pleases provided he pays for it. He has a right to see that the State does not insist on teaching his child that in which he does not believe, and that right we are prepared to concede. He has no right to require at the public expense instruction in his own particular faith. The parents who really concern themselves about the religious faith of their children do not rely only on the instruction they may receive at the elementary school. The parents who do not trouble are not likely to make any private effort to instil religious feeling in their children and they will not be made to concern themselves by talk about inalienable rights or by multiplying denominational schools. This subject has played a large part in the educational campaign in Lancashire. The hon. Member for the Walton Division of Liverpool and the Bishop of Manchester have undertaken to speak for Lancashire on this subject; but on it Lancashire has not always the same voice. I find that the Bishop of Manchester and the hon. Member for Walton stated in the famous letter to *The Times* that in the elementary schools of the country the right of the parents to determine the character of the religious education which shall be given to their children—

> "Is one of the points on which it is certain that an overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of Lancashire will insist."

They were challenged by my hon. friend the Member for the Abercromby Division of Liverpool and others. They were asked: "Do you mean that the parents' right shall override the trust?" The hon. Member for Walton said of course it did, but the Bishop of Manchester took up a different position. Only a few days later, at a public meeting in Manchester, the Bishop said that he was prepared to grant this right, not if it overrode the trust, but without impairing the trusts; so that there you have a conflict between the parents' rights and the rights of property. The position we are now left in with regard to parents' rights is more than ever confused. The "parental rights" as advocated do not mean the unfettered rights of parents, who constitute the great mass of the public, to control the public elementary schools for which they pay. Parental rights are to be the rights of the parents to agree with the trust deeds. If they do not agree with the trust deeds the trust deeds are to prevail. I have no unkindly feeling towards the Bishop of Manchester, but as I read his proposals in the Press and elsewhere I gather that they are these—

> "Let the parental right prevail universally, but when I say 'universally' I mean (on second thoughts) where the trusts do not forbid them to prevail. We agree for the sake of peace to the establishment of absolute educational equality, but I mean the equality which will preserve to us all our existing privileges at the public expense."

I would ask, then, what it is the Church of England itself has to consider. I hear men talk about the strength of the Church's position. I do not know exactly to what they refer, but if they mean that they will be able to hang on to their present attitude for a couple of years, and then that there must be a change of Government, they are taking a very shortsighted view of the public movement. Some of their wisest counsellors believe that also. I find that the Bishop of Wakefield gave a solemn warning at the Representative Church Council last week when he said that—

> "Churchmen were giving the impression that they cared more for their internal differences than for the general educational progress of the country . . . the spectacle of Christian people, not without much bitterness in many cases, continuing this controversy over many years had become a scandal and a stumbling block."

And—

> "They were not so strong in regard to their Church schools as they were."

One thing that the Act of 1902 has done is that it has opened the floodgates; and, furthermore, the preponderance of the Church schools has largely diminished. One of my hon. friends asked me a question, I think on Friday or Monday, as to the number of children in attendance in the Church schools in 1897 and 1907, showing the increase or decrease in the decennial period. During these ten years the number of children in the Church schools in average attendance increased by 28,000; the number in the Roman Catholic schools increased by 45,000, while the number in the council and other schools increased by 729,145. That is an indication of which, I think, Churchmen will do well to take note. It means an enormous change in the numbers of children who are passing into the publicly controlled schools. There is another consideration which Churchmen should bear in mind—and that is the onward march of local government. You have given the local authorities some taste of what they may do since 1902 and there is some indication of what they intend to do. They are to keep the schools in good repair, and in consenting to the control of these schools being in their hands they are not likely to lie quiet, even if this Government went out of power, with a control which gave them only one-third of the managers. They are not going to agree, in regard to inspection to part with control so long as the schools may dip their hands into the pockets of the ratepayers. Furthermore, in reference to veto on the appointment or dismissal of teachers, I would point out that really the most important element in the educational controversy is: "Who is to pay for and to control the teacher?" I turn to the proposals made from the opposite side, and I find a unanimity that, whatever may happen, the teachers are to be selected for a denominational purpose. I agree that in some instances this selection may be absolutely vital. In the Roman Catholic schools it would be an outrage on the feelings of the parents to have a child taught by Protestant teachers. Roman Catholics disagree with Protestants in matters of history, and they could not have in the Roman Catholic schools the same teaching, for example, of the Reformation as in the Protestant schools. We have provided for that special case in the only way which fairly meets the requirements of the case. I know that strong objection is taken to contracting-out on both sides of the House. I wish it were not necessary; I wish that all our schools could come into the State system. Contracting-out is not a new proposal. The hon. Member for the Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities and the hon. Member for Preston proposed contracting-out in 1906. Curiously, the proposal made by the hon. Member for Preston was almost exactly the proposal you now find in this Bill—contracting-out on the widest possible scale, not contracting-out in special cases, not contracting-out for the four-fifths schools, but contracting-out on a wholesale basis; yet the hon. Member for the Walton Division was found in the lobby supporting that proposal which he now thinks good enough to beat our backs with. Then there was the Archbishop of Canterbury's proposal in the House of Lords, suggesting that there should be contracting-out under certain conditions with regard to the teachers. If you are to have contracting-out, you must consider on what terms the contracting-out schools are to stand. The noble Lord the Member for Chorley suggested that our proposal would drive these schools back to the nineties. Up to 1897 the grant was 31s.; from 1897 to 1902 it was roughly 36s.; from 1902 to now it is 36s. to 42s. or 43s. plus rate aid. Now we suggest 47s., which is an increase of 5s. 6d. to 6s., and if we are driven back to the nineties there is a difference of something like 16s. between now and then.

LORD BALCARRES: The increased cost would be 35s.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The noble Lord's figures will not bear scrutiny. Yesterday he quoted figures with regard to the schools in Lancashire, but they are not to be found in official documents, and I must regard them as not being reliable.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University): Can the right hon. Gentleman give the increase in the council schools during that time?

MR. RUNCIMAN: It has been very large, I agree; and the increase of our grant is very large. We are prepared to devote £1,500,000 as extra grant, and this extra grant will bring a benefit to the constituencies represented by hon. Members opposite. The city of Liverpool alone will, according to the Return, get the advantage of an equivalent of 1¾d. in the rate, and every county, borough, and local education authority will receive a benefit from the grants which we are prepared to make under the provisions of the Bill. The noble Lord suggested that the whole thing was abnormal. He took two instances. This is the kind of thing to which we are subjected. He said that in Ebbw Vale we are giving assistance equivalent to an eight-penny rate. I pass over the fact that there is not the same valuation in Ebbw Vale as there is in West Ham. Such is the enthusiasm for education in Ebbw Vale, and such are the requirements of the district, that they are prepared to bear what is equivalent to a half-crown rate, an example that might well be followed in some Lancashire towns. He compares that with West Ham, where the benefit is only one-eighth or one-third of a penny. But in the comparison he made he altogether overlooked the fact that we have provided West Ham, as a necessitous school area, with a grant of £48,000 during the last few years. The benefits which are to be given to Ebbw Vale have been given beforehand to West Ham. Turn to Edmonton. That is another case in point. It has a small benefit, I admit, under this scheme, but it has received £9,000 as a necessitous area during the last few years. You believe the grant should be based on population. We believe it should be based on some system which will bear direct relation to the needs of the neighbourhood. When we come to the discussion of these figures in so far as they affect Catholic schools, I would like to point out a rather startling comparison. I admit that there is a very large margin between the 47s. grant and the total cost per child in Catholic as well as in Church schools. There is meant to be a difference. You cannot be outside the State system and have the advantage of being outside the State system without suffering some of the disadvantages. Mark what happens in Scotland. The grant in Scotland, I think, works out at about 38s. per child in the case of Catholic schools. There is no rate and there is no public control. The subscribers there pay very large sums of money. I do not suggest that 38s. would be enough in England. In Scotland the system works on the 38s. basis, and it can work in England. I am perfectly sure that 47s. is far above the average of the cost in many of the towns, even in Lancashire. I have some figures that have been before me for some time. They show that the cost works out in some towns even under 40s. I admit it is rather rare. In many it works out at 42s. Forty-seven shillings is in many instances a generous allowance. I do not wish the Catholic schools of this country to be unfitted for the work for which they exist. I for one would never be a party to the destruction of the Catholic schools, considering all the circumstances of the case. But let me point out the great difference between those who wish to contract out of the State system and those who are prepared to come in. The whole difference lies round the selection of the teacher. Those denominations who control a very large number of elementary schools in this country have the right to preserve their teacherships for members of their own denominations. They have also an equal right with Nonconformity to such posts as they can secure in open competition in council schools, and they have also preserved to them a number of posts which are closed to Nonconformists and everybody else. That is a marked difference, and I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that if he can find no justification for thus treating these schools outside the State system, which wish to have complete control of their teachers and wish to preserve their teacherships for members of their own denomination, he is mistaken altogether as to the basis on which all grants have been made in the past and will be made in the future. There have been many descriptions of the contracting-out system offered in this House. I only offer one of the Bill in so far as it relates to contracting-out. We believe in providing, as far as we can in this Protestant country, for a settlement on a Protestant basis, making an exception and provision for non-Protestant parents. That, I think, sums up the policy of our Bill. Let me turn to the provisions which we hope to incorporate in our Bill that provide for the preservation of Protestant teaching. I know some hard things have been said about Cowper-Temple teaching. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition is not prepared to say hard things about it. I think in 1906 he said in this House that there was a great deal of good in it. His exact words were really rather telling. He said—

> "I attach the greatest value to Cowper-Temple teaching. I not only said I attached great value to it, but I said in my speech I would prefer this unjust and one-sided system to a system which excluded religion."

That was one declaration on the subject. I come to the next—

> "I believe there is in it a great deal of most admirable religious teaching."

If that be so, I think we have, at all events, disposed of some of the critics on his own side. But what is Cowper-Temple teaching? It is defined in the Bill as being in consonance with the syllabus of the London County Council. I go through that syllabus and I find there the basis of the whole Christian doctrine that is taught in our Churches to-day. You have teaching which covers not only the Old Testament, but the New Testament. Take the First Standard, for instance. The children are to learn the Lord's Prayer, the twenty-third

Psalm, simple stories from the Book of Genesis, the leading facts in the life of Our Lord in simple language. I pass over the intermediate standards, and I come to Standard IV., which is a very good example. The children learn the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, St. Matthew, chap. 5, verses 1–12, St. Matthew, chap. 22, verses 35–40, Psalm 121, the 14th chapter of John, 1–15, Psalm 125, studies from the Book of Joshua, a fuller account of the life of Our Lord, with special reference to the events which occurred during the last visit to Jerusalem prior to the final appearance before Pilate. That is the kind of teaching that is given, and it is described in one of the religious papers—I think it was the *Church Times*—as the religious invention of the County Council. Happily, that is not the opinion either of the people of this country or of the people who send their children to Cowper-Temple schools. There are Members of this House who were trained in schools under this Cowper-Temple teaching, and I do not know that they make any worse Members on that account.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Who are they ?

MR. RUNCIMAN: The charge that is made against this system is that it is the teaching which Nonconformists want. We have heard so much of that in these debates that I had imagined it was played out. It is what they do not disapprove of, but it is not all they want. There are some Gentlemen in this House so ignorant of Nonconformity that they do not know there is any difference between Presbyterians and Baptists.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: What is the difference ?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I do not know that the difference can be better personified than in the cases of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition and my hon. friend who was president of the Baptist Union last year. I say this teaching is not the teaching that all Nonconformists want. Presbyterians do not ask for the Shorter Catechism; Wesleyans do not ask for the Wesleyan Catechism or for Wesley's Notes on the New Testament; Baptists do not ask for their form of teaching of Baptismal Regeneration. But they find it a very good basis, as, indeed, do all the Christian Churches, on which you can build up afterwards a religious superstructure. I believe the hon. Member for North-West Manchester, who made a glowing speech yesterday—I quite agree, from his point of view, it was a very good one—said that many local authorities did not give Cowper-Temple teaching to-day. What does he mean by many ? There are eight out of the thousands of local authorities who do not give Cowper-Temple teaching. He asked: "How would the President of the Board of Education propose to deal with the cases of Devonshire, Warwickshire, and Worcestershire, which had no scheme of religious instruction ?" I was rather impressed with that point, and I have taken the trouble to look at what takes place in the case of Devonshire. The question was asked of the Devon County Council:—

> "Can you give any information now in the possession of your authority as to the religious instruction, other than that in its regulations or syllabus, given in individual council schools ?"

To that there is the reply—

> "When preparing their regulations the authority decided not to interfere with the discretion of the managers in regard to religious instruction. Speaking generally, religious instruction in the council schools is given on the same lines as under the syllabus of the school boards before the appointed day. The authority has made no special inquiries as to the nature of the instruction given."

On the strength of that information it is insinuated in this House that in Devonshire no religious instruction is given in the county council schools. The next question is—

> "Are any council schools in the authority's area known to give no religious instruction, and, if so, how many ?"

The answer is—

> "No council schools are known to give no religious instruction."

The same thing applies to Warwickshire and Worcestershire. If the instruction is to be left to the managers or the teachers, I say it is unfair, therefore, to stigmatise the teaching as irreligious. I quite agree that the teacher can only teach well that which he believes, but he cannot teach all that he believes;

he cannot teach the mature conception and refined distinction of a highly sensitive intelligence. But the syllabus adopted in the council schools offers, if well done, a simple basis for religious and moral instruction. It is the sort of teaching given on most days in Church schools, and it is suitable for children of tender years. If taught with sincerity by a good man, it is valued by all those whose first consideration is the welfare of the children. To Churchmen I would say, let them recognise frankly what they do get under the Bill of my right hon. friend. The first thing they have got is that the Bill recognises the essential difference between the problem in the single-school parishes and in the other parishes where there is a choice of schools. It also recognises the necessity of a positive definition of Cowper-Temple teaching. The Cowper-Temple clause is a purely negative clause. In this Bill we provide a positive definition of Cowper-Temple teaching. It also recognises what Churchmen care for most—that if they hand over their schools there shall be some security that Christian teaching shall continue to be provided in them. Now I turn, and it is my last point, to the teacher. We are now providing that the teachers shall receive equal treatment, and if this principle is applied to the teacherships, the closing of teacherships in Church schools against Nonconformists must break down. The hon. and learned Member for the Walton Division said they gave full control with the simple exception of the teacher under the previous Act, but that simple exception of the teacher was the most important of all. The hardships under which Nonconformist teachers suffered in the past were eased in some slight degree by the Act of 1902, but the headmastership is still closed against them. Is it any wonder that Nonconformists have declared that that cannot go on? They have had to fight for their rights in the past, and are not likely to lie quiet under existing disabilities. Nonconformists have not been reared under the kindly patronage of the nobility and gentry. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."] For generations they have suffered persecution, and now, as men's views are widening, as the numbers of the Nonconformists grow, persecution is passing away and is passing into something known as toleration. We believe that toleration ought to be succeeded by equality. May I, then, take it that whenever a teachership is provided by the local authority with the whole salary paid out of the public fund absolute equality is to prevail in all schools? No, Sir; this claim to tests and exclusion cannot continue. The position of the Established Church has been modified in recent years. Nonconformity has grown with increasing rapidity all over the country, and even at this time, for the first time, but not for the last, the Established Church finds itself in a minority. That is a remarkable fact which those who have the interests of the Established Church at heart would do well to remember. The demand for teachers is exceeding the supply, and we do an educational injustice when we prevent a good man from being appointed to a school where he might well carry on educational work, merely because he is a Presbyterian, a Wesleyan, or a Baptist. I do not think it is any wonder that the agitation for free teacherships and freedom from tests should have continued from year to year. I desire, as far as possible, that the teaching of children should be in the hands of men and women of religious spirit, but you cannot foster religious spirit by test and exclusion. Members of the Established Church will not for a single moment imagine that in claiming for Nonconformists equal rights with Churchmen I mean any harm to the Established Church—[OPPOSITION cries of "Oh"]—perhaps hon. Gentlemen will give me credit for some sincerity, but these sectarian struggles injure education in its religious as well as its secular aspect and break the patience of all sensible men. Those who hope for a conciliatory spirit do it as much for the sake of the spiritual life as for the educational efficiency of the schools. We appeal to Churchmen as well as Nonconformists to take a broad view. This world is not so good that we can afford to dissipate religious forces by squabbles and jealousies. The Church of England may have to give up some privileges. It is hard to give up privileges and hard to share with others what we have always regarded as our exclusive rights; but for the Church the sacrifice will be worth while, and she must recognise those who belong to other religious bodies as allies and not subordinates in the long war between right and wrong.

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON (Oxford University) said that the tone of the right hon. Gentleman's speech compared unfavourably with that of the First Lord of the Admiralty. The House was now left in still further doubt as to the intentions and proposals of the Government if they were to attach any importance to the words of the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading. He had commended the Bill of the Bishop of St. Asaph and had endeavoured to show that the two measures, the Bishop's Bill and his own, were so alike as to be almost indistinguishable. But the Bill of the Bishop of St. Asaph and that of the Government were in essential parts incompatible and repugnant documents, and the latter measure only was before the House. What they had before them was the Second Reading of the Government Bill, and the merits of that Bill had been pressed upon them with the utmost vehemence in all its most repulsive provisions by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. What was the principle of the Bill? That every public elementary school was to be undenominational. This was emphatically an undenominational Bill, and the parent of every child who wanted undenominational teaching was to have such a school within reach of him. The Government in laying down that principle had ignored a large factor in the educational provision of the country, namely, that about half the children in the elementary schools were brought up in voluntary schools where denominational religious teaching was given, that that teaching went on with the goodwill of the parents, without violence to conscience, without any pressure on the teacher, and without detriment to the peace of the locality. He did not dispute the fact that there were areas where there were a considerable number of Nonconformists who had only one school to attend and in which there were only Church teachers. He was not prepared to say that because no complaints was made no grievance was felt, or that if there were a choice of schools the parents would not avail themselves of it. He had had strange experiences of the way in which Nonconformist children went to denominational and even Roman Catholic schools where there was a full choice of schools, but he had never denied that the single-school area difficulty was inadequately dealt with in 1902. That grievance, however, might be dealt with without hardship to the existing voluntary schools, but the Government did not propose to take any such course, but were creating a grievance which, compared to that now existing, was simply intolerable. They proposed to confiscate the rural schools and to take other people's property, built and maintained for a particular purpose, and to use it for purposes for which it was not intended. The right hon. Gentleman said there were only 3,700 schools under trusts or limited trusts which would be confiscated.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I never said confiscated.

*SIR WILLIAM ANSON said it was quite true that the right hon. Gentleman did not use the word confiscated, but where they definitely proposed to take other people's property, built and maintained for a particular purpose, and appropriate it to themselves, and use it for purposes for which it was not intended he called that confiscation. When the right hon. Gentleman limited the figures to 3,700 he could not precisely contradict his figures, although he had some doubts as to their accuracy. Exception had been taken to the use of the word "confiscation," but cases had already been given of schools built for a particular purpose held under trusts to give education in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of England, and these would be taken over, the freehold would be assigned to the local authority, and the teaching which would be given in those schools would be precisely that sort of teaching which the schools were built to avoid. Besides this the parents of the children were to have no choice if they disliked that teaching. Under what conditions was this done? These schools were held under trusts to give education in accordance with the doctrines of the Church of England. The Board of Education said, "We are Charity Commissioners. We can and we will, interpret your trusts. So far as secular education is concerned, the local authority will carry them out. So far as the doctrines of the Church of England are concerned, we will allow you, as a favour, the use of the schools for the purposes of catechism on Saturdays and Sundays, and on one or two days after school hours if you can get the children to come in." That seemed to him to add legal chicanery to robbery, and the fact that the right hon. Gentleman was, as he said, only dealing with 3,700 schools was no extenuation of his offence. But, with all this, they did not get a uniform system, because they left to denominationalists the poor consolation of contracting-out. He had not heard any one say a good word for contracting-out. The right hon. Gentleman himself, he thought, regarded it as a painful necessity if the Bill was to have any chance of getting through. In fact, it was put in because he did not wish, as he said, immediately to destroy the Catholic schools. He would only say this of contracting-out—that it was educationally retrograde and bad, financially impossible, and essentially unjust. The sum named as the payment for each child, 47s., was impossible. But the schools were not secure even of that, and there was no assurance that, when the circumstances of the time were, in the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman, favourable to the destruction of Roman Catholic and other voluntary schools, he might not reduce the 47s. to a point at which existence was practically impossible. The right hon. Gentleman had said the thing could be easily done for that money. If he would study the Return for 1907 on the incidence of rates and the cost of maintenance in the various schools, he would find that in counties where education was cheaper the cost of maintenance alone, the payment of teachers and provision of books and appliances came to 8s. 6d. a child more than the 47s., and that in almost every borough and urban district it came to 15s. 6d. more. In London, it came to a great deal more than that. He would like to ask whether this solution of the question met any one of the requirements which a solution of the education question ought to meet? Did it promote religious equality? Could any settlement be said to carry with it the quality of even treatment or religious equality if half the nation got the education of their children free, and if a considerable portion had to pay, not only a contribution towards the education of the rest, but also for the teaching of their own children and the maintenance of their school buildings in addition? He had heard exhortations from hon. Gentlemen on the other side to accept a national solution. What they meant by a national solution was a universal system of council schools. But was that a national solution? It was a solution which gratified Nonconformists, but Nonconformists were not the nation. He would not wish to speak with any disrespect of the Nonconformist conscience, but that extremely wayward and somewhat tyrannous creature was, happily, not the conscience of the nation, and a solution which gratified a section of the community, narrow-minded and tyrannous in religious matters, and which left a very large proportion of the population dissatisfied, labouring under a keen sense of hardship, was in no sense a national solution. Was it educationally good? He did not see how they could call any solution which imposed the contracting-out principle an educational solution. A contracted-out school would be starved: it would be outside local control, and it would be subject merely to the inspection of the Department. They all knew very well about the old system of inspection of voluntary schools. The inspectors necessarily took a more lenient view of the voluntary schools, knowing as they did that they were constantly labouring under financial difficulties, and that the board schools had command of the rates. The same thing would inevitably occur until the right hon. Gentleman said: "Now circumstances admit of my destroying all the voluntary schools in the kingdom." The solution which involved contracting-out did not carry out the mandate which hon. Members opposite claimed to have received from the country—the mandate of complete popular control and no tests for teachers. Popular control disappeared in the contracted-out school; and what security was there that there would not be tests for teachers? The scheme of the Government did not make for religious equality; it was not a national solution; and it was not educationally good. What was the educational policy of the Government? It was not the same in England as in Ireland; it was not the same in the House of Lords as in the House of Commons. The Chief Secretary for Ireland had proposed an Irish Universities Bill which created a denominational atmosphere for higher education in Ireland. Under the right hon. Gentleman's scheme there was not the slightest chance of a Protestant being appointed to any post in the Roman Catholic University, or of a Roman Catholic being appointed to any post in the Presbyterian University. In England the same right hon. Gentleman had introduced and carried through the House what he constantly and proudly described as an undenominational Bill. So much for the consistency of the Government in different parts of the United Kingdom. Now he came to the consistency of the Government in the two Houses of Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman had defended his Bill in the tone of a "whole-hogger." He was for the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill—a Bill which was essentially undenominational. But what was the Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill, which the representative of the Government in the House of Lords entreated the Lords to read a second time, and to which the First Lord of the Admiralty besought the House of Commons to give the most friendly consideration? It was a Bill which admitted denominational teaching on two days at least in the week, not merely in the transferred voluntary schools, but also in every council school in the kingdom, and which allowed that teaching to be given by the regular teachers. He should like very much to know what the position of the Government really was. He supposed they would know when the Prime Minister closed the debate. There was no doubt that although the President of the Board of Education had made a most unconciliatory speech in which the possibility of settlement was compromised if not destroyed, the tone of the First Lord of the Admiralty was distinctly conciliatory, and for his own part he would not say a word which would make an amicable settlement of this painful question more difficult than it was. The First Lord of the Admiralty invited the Opposition to offer suggestions. It was not their business to offer suggestions. It was not they who had brought in the Education Bill, and it was not they who had unsettled the educational system. The Act of 1902 was working well over the greater part of the Kingdom. It was only working with difficulty where an effort had been made by some of the right hon. Gentleman's distinguished colleagues to make it work badly. He could not think that the whole scheme of elementary education wanted such complete reconstruction as was now proposed by the Government. They were told that terrible things would happen if the House of Lords declined to pass the Education Bill of 1906. Things had gone on pretty well since then, in spite of the somewhat partial administration by the Education Office of the provisions affecting the relationship of the voluntary schools and the local authorities. What they hoped for was something of a somewhat more conciliatory character than had been heard that night from the President of the Board of Education. He was not one of those who was alarmed by the secular bogey with which they were threatened in the national schools and the council schools, and which had been raised in this debate as it was raised in the debate of 1906. Secular education had been urged upon them from the benches below the gangway in a very earnest and powerful speech by a distinguished Member of the Labour Party, by whom the case could not have been better stated in the interest of education. It was also urged by certain eminent ecclesiastics, partly because it was popular, and partly because they thought that it would give more complete and full control of religious teaching than could be obtained under any other system. But whatever might be said or felt by the Labour Members, he was convinced that the working classes of the country did not want secular education, and would not have it, and that no Government which desired to prolong its existence for any reasonable term would go to the country and say: "We are for secular education." For his own part, he hoped that as these debates went on they would hear something which would tend more to a settlement of the undoubtedly open questions left by the Act of 1902, than what they had heard that night. For his own part, he would accept no settlement which would not make for religious equality and provide for the parent the religious education which he desired for his children.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.) said he remembered many debates on Education Bills, but he thought that the characteristic of the present, as compared with its predecessors, was that on the present occasion they had listened to each others' views more quietly and patiently than they used to do, and they seemed to understand each others' views better than before. That, in itself, was a hopeful sign. If they could reduce this burning question in temperature to such a degree that they might handle it without blistering their fingers, they might come to a system which they might all more or less accept; but he doubted whether the seeds of a compromise had yet been successfully sown. At any rate, they had not yet germinated in this House. He was not certain that they ought to have germinated in the suggestions made in the first speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty; because, if he understood that speech aright, it meant that they were to import into the Bill before the House the very objectionable non-educational provision of contracting-out, and add to that another objectionable and non-educational provision known as the right of entry. As long as an Education Bill contained them he believed it would not pass this House, or if it did pass this House it certainly would not become law. The dangers of contracting-out were not lessened, but greatly increased, by any proposal to add the objectionable feature known as the right of entry. The Act of 1902 did good to education, at the cost of doing violence to conscience and to the well-known political principle, of long application in this country, of the public control of public money. Violence to conscience consisted, as explained in this debate, in compelling persons to pay for the teaching of religious tenets; the teachers, who were public servants, were wholly remunerated for their work, including religious teaching, out of public funds. That was an evil in the existing law which would have to be removed, and would be removed sooner or later. Therefore, the Act which did good educationally did violence to the great political principle of public control of public money. He had tried to discover some other example in this country in which public money was spent, managed, controlled, guided, and administered by private persons privately appointed. He was speaking of money drawn from the taxpayers and ratepayers of the country, and he knew of no other case in this country in which the expenditure of public money was not accompanied by public control, or by persons appointed by the public. He was anxious both on public grounds and on the grounds of conscience that these anomalies in the Act of 1902 should be remedied. But he would not remedy those anomalies by a Bill which would do violence to education. If it was wrong to do violence to conscience and to political principles, it was wrong to do violence to education; and he was sure that it would do violence to education if contracting-out were carried into effect. He had heard claims made on behalf of the parents. He did not believe that the parents of the children in any of the schools made the claim which hon. Members supposed they did. What they did ask for was not denominational teaching in the faith which they themselves believed, nor for the appointment of teachers who held the faith which they themselves held. The real demand by parents was for good schooling and a good school. He believed that if they were to take the parents of the children in council schools, voluntary schools, or any other schools, and consulted them one by one, not 5 per cent. would raise this question of religious teaching or management by persons belonging to a single religious community in the country. The Roman Catholics and Jews were in a different category; but he believed that if the parents of children in council schools, Church of England schools, and Wesleyan schools were consulted one by one, not 5 per cent. of them would desire special religious instruction in their faith. What did the parent want? He wanted for his child education. He was conscious that he had himself missed that boon, and how much he had missed by that lack. He saw more thoroughly than he had ever done before that the race of life for the future was to the educated, and what he demanded for his child was good teaching and a good school. It did not matter very much to him whether that good teaching was accompanied by the learning of certain catechisms associated with certain Churches or not. If it was said that a parent sent his children to a school because the teacher was an ecclesiastical person, and that the school should remain under ecclesiastical control, the parent would reply that that was not what he wanted—he wanted good teaching and a good school. If they asked the parent whether he was anxious that religion should be taught in the schools, he believed that in a great majority of cases the parent would say "Yes." Some parents might not be either for church or chapel, but they wanted their children to have some religious teaching in the schools. They would find many parents throughout the country who were not teetotalers in practice, who were not averse to entering public-houses, or taking a glass of beer, but who liked their children to receive instruction in temperance. Similarly, there were parents who might not be persons of religious mind, but who were desirous that their children should receive some teaching in religion, but he did not belive that there was anything like a majority of parents, or even a large minority of parents, who desired their children to receive a particular kind of teaching provided by persons belonging to a particular denomination. The parent did not care for the Church or the Catholic, or even the Nonconformist view; he cared for the school. If he wanted a compromise, it must be a compromise which would produce good schools. He did not want right of entry, or contracting-out in this or any other Bill, and it was clear that there was no party in the House prepared to accept contracting-out, and no party content with the right of entry as the other ground of compromise. Compromise in things far more difficult than this had been arranged. Quite recently a compromise had been arranged in a most bitter controversy in a non-party way, and if he might make a suggestion to the Government on this matter he would suggest that they should withdraw this Bill and set up the round table conference, to which so much reference had been made, so that it might be possible in the next year to bring in an agreed Bill. If, however, an agreed Bill could not be arrived at, then they should bring in a Bill of principles in this matter. It was no Bill of Liberal principles that included in it the principle of contracting out, the removal from public control, as it now existed, of a large number of the schools of this country. It was not a Bill of Liberal principles that said that tests were not to be applied to teachers, and yet provided that in all these schools that contracted-out teachers should have tests riveted on them more closely than ever. Let the Government affirm wholly and solely public control of education paid by public money. Let them also affirm that there should be no theological tests for teachers. Let them carry the Bill through the House, and then if that Bill met in another place the fate which other Education Bills had met it would at least meet its fall honourably and bravely. It would not be a weak compromise based on a policy which would damage education. If a Bill of Liberal principles, framed on the great Liberal principles for which the Liberal Party had fought for so many years, was disregarded and thrown out by the House of Lords, then let the Government take the opinion of the country upon it. This question might not be settled by one, two, or three general elections. He could not agree to the Second Reading of this Bill.

*MR. H. GOOCH (Camberwell, Peckham) said they had heard chiefly in the present debates of the religious question, but the religious question very rarely troubled them in practice, because in most cases there was a choice of schools, and a choice of religious instruction, and consequently no difficulty. In single-school areas of course, a difficulty might arise, but in that case it would arise through the parents belonging to more than one denomination. The solution of that difficulty lay in providing in the school sufficient types of religious instruction to meet the various types of religion of the parents outside. The House must recognise that the people who paid rates and taxes in a given area had different religious views and had (within reasonable limits) a right to have their views met. It was contended by hon. Gentlemen opposite that if that principle was conceeded every sort and kind of opinion would demand facilities. In practice that was not found to be the case. How many classes had to be provided for Cowper-Temple teaching was taken as the mean, and he thought that teaching extraordinarily good, and hoped he would never see anything done to remove it from the schools, but it had one great defect. It did not meet the views of everybody. They had to deal with two other classes, one which wanted more definite dogmatic religious teaching than was given in the County Council syllabus, and the other which wanted less. Those who wanted less had their point met by the conscience clause. That clause also met the difficulty of those who desired secular education and no religious teaching at all. Now, as this class had an option under the conscience clause it was only fair and reasonable that a person who wanted more definite and dogmatic teaching for his child should also have the same option. The London County Council in East London, where the population was largely Jewish, had made special arrangements for the schools. They had specially rearranged the schools in order to meet the question of the Jewish holidays. But when a member of the Church of England desired to have his children taken to Church on Ash Wednesday, or any other day which fell in school term, there were considerable difficulties in his way. The right of entry had been recognised by statute for many years in the industrial schools supported with public money. Not only for the past forty years had they had denominational teaching, but the minister went to the industrial school to give that teaching to the particular child whose parents desired it. This facility had worked very smoothly and happily. Section 18 of the Industrial Schools Act, said—

> "In determining on the school the justice and magistrates shall endeavour to ascertain the religious persuasion to which the child belongs, and shall, if possible select a school of such religious persuasion and the order shall specify such religious persuasion."

This principle was recognised even in the Children Bill, because Clause 62 of that Bill was to the same effect. Therefore, it was absurd to say that the same principle could not be observed in the elementary school. The Act of 1902 did make for a national system by providing that there should be only one class of school; but this Bill would undo that provision. This Bill would set up two kinds of schools, and gravitate distinctly away from the goal and make a national system perfectly impossible. The Government offered contracting out. He held contracting out on the Government terms to be unjust in principle and perfectly disastrous in practice. No one could accept contracting-out who knew how it would work out in practice in the schools. Take the case of London, with which he was fairly conversant. The education of a child in a non-provided school in London cost 76s. 8d.—in round figures say 77s. There were 150,000 children in the non-provided schools of London. The Government only offered 47s., and the cost was 77s. at the present moment. The cost of education, as everyone knew, would increase, if upon nothing else upon the salaries of the teachers, who had been placed on a rising scale of pay. If the contracting-out school child cost 77s., what money would the managers have to provide? First of all, he was offered the grant of 47s. if he got it. The grant was not to exceed 47s. The provision of the Bill was in an absolutely negative form. There was no guarantee whatever for the continuous payment of the grant. There was nothing to prevent the Education Department from adding by Departmental Minute as many regulations as they pleased as conditions of payment of the Parliamentary grant, and when once the school had contracted-out, by the repeal of Section 7 of the Act of

1902, the local authority was relieved of all the responsibility. If it was difficult before the Act of 1902 for the voluntary schools to make up a deficit, it would be far more difficult at the present time. The schools had been reorganised, their classes had been cut down, their buildings remodelled, and their teachers were properly paid, being on a rising scale. To offer contracting-out on the present terms to such schools was a mockery and a farce. There was no guarantee whatever under the financial proposals as at present framed that a single farthing of any sort or kind would be paid from public moneys to these schools. The schools that had contracted-out would be left without rates, and with a grant which could be withdrawn or reduced and was in no way secure. At any rate they were told that the present financial arrangements would not last longer than 1911, and the whole thing might be recast when the school had already contracted-out, and there was no responsibility on the local education authority to maintain it. Even assuming the most favourable aspect of this case, every non-provided school in London which contracted-out would be at least 30s. short per annum, with the certainty of a greater deficit hereafter. Meanwhile, what about the school, the children, and the teachers of London? After an immense amount of labour and expense, the non-provided schools had been brought very nearly, if not quite, up to the level of the provided schools. The result of contracting-out in London would mean that the whole of these would begin to go back. First of all, the teachers who had been put on the same scale as the teachers in the council schools, and also upon a rising scale, would begin to leave, and would be replaced by inferior teachers of poor qualifications. The second thing that would happen would be that the contracted-out schools would lose the help of the Council's central machinery, its inspectors, its organisers, and all its central expert staff, and the result would be that the school would gravitate towards the minimum of efficiency. The plant of the school, the books, maps, desks, furniture and so forth, all of which within the last four years they had brought up very nearly if not quite to the standard of the council school, would all go back too, and probably the buildings also. Did the Government seriously require that the supporters of contracted-out schools should be called upon to find 30s. in addition to the rates and taxes which they paid for the provided and non-provided schools? Surely it was perfectly unreasonable to ask them to do so simply because they happened to hold strong religious convictions. The result of contracting-out would be that they would go back to the bad old days before 1902, and the parent would be placed in the cruel dilemma of having either to give up his religious convictions or send his child to a school where that child's future welfare would be sacrificed and he would be handicapped for life. He wanted to take one or two practical points. They had heard a great deal about religious questions, but nobody he h d heard in that House had dealt with the question as to how contracting-out would actually work in the schools even were there no religious question. Let them take the very necessary and practical work of the attendance officer. If the contracted-out school was outside the national system, how would the attendance officer deal with the children? Would he be able to enter the schools as he did now, and as he was able to do before 1902 in both provided and non-provided schools, and see that the children attended, or would he only be able to take the child as far as the gates and trust to luck for the rest? If he was unable to enter the school, if he had no jurisdiction, the inevitable result would be that many parents would try to withdraw their children from school, and would play off one school against the other, and the children would not attend ten times in the week as they wanted them to do, but only six times, or whatever was just enough to escape punishment by the magistrate when the parents were brought up. What about the accommodation? Would the contracted-out schools be recognised by the local authority? In London, very often they had a non-provided school and provided school in the same street, sometimes two or three. At the present time they were all recognised as providing school places for the elementary school population. If the non-provided school did not provide accommodation, on what basis would the local authority draw up its accommodation for the neighbourhood? Then there was the question of scholarships. Would the contracted-out school children be eligible for scholarships? As long as scholarships were simply given on the result of examinations, anybody could compete in those examinations; but many were firmly opposed to the system of examination, and would like to choose scholars from our elementary schools by other means, and in that case where did the contracted-out child come in? Was he to be eligible for these scholarships? If not, why had the parents to pay for them out of the rates? A great deal of the child's school life was passed outside the school building altogether. There was wood-work and metal-work, instruction in which was given at nearly all the best elementary schools. At the present time there were 11,500 children out of the non-provided schools who were learning metal and manual work in the Council's centres. What was going to happen to those children if they were in a contracted-out school? Were they to be turned out? The parents of these children paid the rates and taxes, and had every right to send their children to those centres. Then there were 8,500 girls from non-provided schools who attended the centres. If those schools were contracted-out, were the Government going to turn the girls out, and, if so, upon what ground? If, on the other hand, they allowed them to come in they would have another difficulty. Part of the education would be paid for out of the rates and part out of the taxes. If the children were allowed to go into the centre, half of the subjects taught would be paid out of the taxes, and the other half out of the taxes and rates. Before the debate closed tomorrow he looked to somebody on the Government Bench bending his mind to these matters, in order to tell them exactly how this contracting-out was going to work in the schools. There was one other curious aspect of this Bill. If there was one thing which Liberals proposed on every possible occasion, it was that the schools should come under public control and be free from clerical control. If this Bill did anything it simply reversed the whole of that process. It took the schools away from public control, and put them under clerical control, which everybody regarded, he believed, Church people included, as one of the worst features of the old system. The Bill, if passed in its present shape, would offend against one of the chief canons of the Liberal Party. He need not add that there had been a crushing condemnation of the contracting-out principle by the National Union of Teachers. Anybody who knew how a school was and must be worked knew that contracting-out was a farce and a mockery, and that the whole thing would lead to absolute confusion and dislocation. The London education authority, on the advice of its expert officers, had had this matter under consideration for a considerable time, and it was discussed by the committees and sub-committees, and eventually by the Council, who passed the following resolution without a division—and he commended this especially to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, who was one of the ornaments of the County Council. This was the resolution of the Council—

> "That in the opinion of the Council the statutory control as given by the Education Acts of 1902–3 to the Council over the non-provided schools, coupled with compulsory rate-aid, has very greatly increased their educational efficiency by: (1) Procuring the improvement of their buildings; (2) increasing the number and improving the qualifications of the staff; (3) supplying improved apparatus, books and furniture; (4) providing instruction for adult unqualified teachers; (5) providing additional instruction in domestic subjects and manual training; (6) reorganising and combining small departments; (7) improving average attendance. That neither the proposed financial assistance nor the proposed supervision as set out in the Bill now before Parliament affords a sufficient guarantee of their continued efficiency. That it is undesirable that the education of children in the elementary State-aided schools should be withdrawn from the control of the directly elected representatives of London."

To offer contracting-out on the present terms, in any shape or form, to London was a farce and a mockery. It was perfectly useless to offer them 47s., 57s., 67s., or even 77s. unless they had some permanent arrangement for the elementary school children in the non-provided schools in London; that was to say, if the Government desired that the children in the two types of schools should have the same chances and the same education. They had heard a good deal about compromises and conferences, and he could say truthfully that any compromise would be welcomed most earnestly by all those who were administering education up and down England. For at least twelve years past they had had an Education Bill brought into the House of Commons nearly every year. These Bills had excited the greatest animosity, and some of them, as in the case of 1906, had been debated very nearly from January to Christmas, and the work of the education authorities was immensely hampered and inconvenienced by the discussion of these Bills in Parliament. If anybody could come forward with a compromise they would be only too glad to meet it. It was far more important to those who were administering this subject to get the matter settled, once and for all, than to secure any party advantage. But to offer contracting-out on the present terms for London simply meant that the educational machinery of London would be absolutely dislocated, and he asked the House not to accept contracting-out in principle till they knew how it was going to work out in practice.

SIR GEORGE SCOTT ROBERTSON (Bradford, Central) said that after hearing the speech of the Minister for Education he felt bound to say how disappointed and depressed he was at certain remarks which he had made. He was, unfortunately, unable to hear the speech of the late Minister, and was still unable fully to appreciate the impression it made upon the House, for while he was informed that he was most conciliatory and amiable in his utterances, the view of *The Times* was that he was hardened and might be described as defiant. Now he supposed the Opposition would rather apply those epithets to the Minister for Education himself, and he was himself disappointed at the terms in which he had spoken of the Catholic schools and the contracting-out clause, and the arrangements which would be made in accordance with Clause 2 of the Bill. He represented a constituency which had a small but important number of Catholics, and having gone carefully into the subject, and into the amount of compensation which would be just and equitable to them if the Bill came into force, he had come to the conclusion that the maximum in Clause 2 was utterly inadequate for their wants, and that they would be placed in a position of decided inferiority to the other schools in the city. The Roman Catholic community in Bradford was extremely poor—one might almost say the word poverty derived a new significance to anyone who had visited the homes of these people. Another very remarkable characteristic was their devotion to their Church. A friend of his was a porter, and some time ago, owing to the heavy debts of the different schools, and an extension being necessary, the Catholic authorities thought it advisable to arrange to have all the money subscribed before they went into further expenditure. This porter paid 5s. a week for two years. That was one instance out of many of the devotion and sacrifice which the Catholics of Bradford continually exhibited. He had been shown pictures in Churches subscribed by millhands and a pulpit subscribed by a woman who sold cabbages in the street. The Church was to them their religion. They recognised themselves as members of a spiritual community which was so closely intimate with their social life that it became a home, and more than a home, to every person there. But, important as their Church was to them, their schools were far more important. In the solemn exhortation which married couples received at the altar they gathered how important it was in this world and the next that the children should be brought up in the only religion which they professed to be a final and satisfactory one. He knew the schools of two churches quite well. Some years ago it was necessary to build new schools, and they incurred the enormous responsibility of spending £20,000 on their erection. To meet that sum the Catholics had to find £600 a year, or £12 a week. Every Saturday at twelve o'clock, whether it was the depth of winter, whether it was raining heavily, or whether there was intense fatigue from heat, from twelve o'clock to five, the parish priest, nearly seventy years of age, and his poor curates, went about from door to door, collecting money to meet this charge. Not only that, but on the Sunday, after the prolonged successive services from seven in the morning till one, the same priests on the same occupation wandered forth from one o'clock till three, when the children's service began. At four o'clock they had a rest for meals —which was thoroughly well-earned— preparation of sermon and so on, until evening service at half-past six. This went on all the year round without intermission, because it was absolutely essential to collect this £12 a week. What was the position, supposing this Bill were to pass to-morrow ? An additional charge would be laid on these two churches of £1,000 a year. That was another £20 a week. So that instead of £12 a week they would have to collect £32. The response of the people to the clergy was extraordinary and admirable. He was speaking of particular schools in Bradford and of instances which he actually knew and understood. This Bill would be a terrible hardship on them. Let the House consider the anger which would animate all those poor people who had to contribute to this extraordinary tax if they were obliged to provide this excessive sum every week. He did not know how the supporters of the Government could reconcile such a proposal with the Liberal principles of religious intolerance and equality of opportunity. He was very disappointed when he heard the Minister for Education speak as if it was right that a certain class of schools should be penalised because they contracted out. That was not just, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would most carefully consider this point. He was sure that, as a reasonable man, the right hon. Gentleman would give this very important matter the consideration it deserved. Many people must be tired of the tedium of these religious controversies. The only point he wished to make was that if people did not like contracting-out and having to pay this maximum sum let them maintain their position. Let the supporters of this Bill say : " Our opponents are wrong, but let us try to convince them and alter their views by reasonable arguments and by every persuasive measure we can adopt, but we will not do anything which may be interpreted as resembling, however remotely, anything approaching persecution."

Mr. George Scott Robertson

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.) said that after the admirable speech to which they had just listened it was not necessary for an Irish Catholic to lay additional stress upon the position of Catholics in this country. He was deeply indebted to the hon. Gentleman for having put forward the specific instance of Bradford. Catholic children were always to be found in large numbers in the great populous centres, and it was there where hardships were bound to be experienced under this Bill. The Minister for Education had emphasised the position of Catholic schools. During the last ten years the increase in the average attendance in the Catholic schools of this country amounted to 40,000, whereas the increase in the case of Church schools had only been about 20,000. This great increase in the average attendance of Catholic children during a period of ten years was a proof of the remarkable way in which the Catholics of this country had determined to carry on the maintenance of Catholic schools. The views of the Irish Party and of the Irish Catholics in this country had been put forward so clearly by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford and the hon. Member for East Mayo that it was hardly necessary for him to dwell upon these points. He thought, however, that it was necessary again to tell the House that they were opposed to the system of contracting-out, and if they had to accept that, then it must be done under such a system as they could look at. The hon. Member for Peckham had shown that as regarded the non-provided schools the 47s. limit in the Bill was absolutely impossible. The President of the Board of Education had stated that in the case of one or two schools it was possible at the present moment to carry on at under 40s. per child, but he did not contest the figures of the hon. and learned Member for Waterford, who showed conclusively that under this Bill an additional burden of £150,000 a year would be placed upon the Catholics of England to keep their schools up to a proper standard of efficiency. In some country districts where the rents were not high and expenses were low probably some Catholic schools could be carried on under 47s., but in such places as Lancashire and Bradford that was impossible. What was going to happen in future under a system of contracting-out if those schools wished to avail themselves of opportunities of co-ordination which they were anxious to establish throughout the country? If Catholic children wished to find their way into the Universities, and to avail themselves of the advantages of county scholarships, how could they do it under the contracting-out system? Surely they could not do one thing in Ireland and another in England. In a purely democratic way they were trying to meet the claim of the Irish people by giving them University education. He noticed that a valuable Amendment had been put down by the Chief Secretary for Ireland by which he was going to allow county councils in Ireland to strike rates in order that the clever boys might be able to avail themselves of University training in Ireland. He was very much afraid that, under this Bill, similar facilities would not be given to Catholic children in England. It might well happen that when the new Universities were established in Ireland the children of Irish parents in England would desire, with the aid of these scholarships, to go to Ireland for a University training more in harmony with their views than they could find in this country. However anxious the Government were to meet the Catholic case—and he welcomed the speech of the Minister for Education as showing his recognition of the sacrifices made by the Catholic parents of this country—he hoped nothing would be done to interfere in the future with the proper and efficient teaching of the Catholic children of this country.

*MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich) said that almost every speaker had expressed a desire to have religious equality for every citizen, and in nearly every case they had argued in favour of some particular section with which they had been associated. At the last election the supporters of the Government pledged themselves to two principles as the basis for a settlement of this question: (1) The popular control of all publicly supported schools; and (2) the abolition of religious tests for teachers. He promised himself to support those principles and naturally he approached the consideration of this Bill from that standpoint. He thought it was generally agreed that this Bill did not fulfil those promises which were made at the last election. He was firmly convinced that no solution of the question would be obtained upon the lines laid down in this Bill. In his opinion there were only two solutions of the education difficulty—either to teach all forms of religious belief in the schools or to teach none at all; and as the teaching of all forms was impracticable, he was forced to the conclusion that the only possible solution was the secular solution. The debate seemed to be charged with an air of unreality, and judging from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading they were not supposed to apply themselves to the consideration of the Bill at all. Some sort of a conference, they were told, was contemplated by which it was hoped a compromise would be effected. He thought that before now some information on that point would have been vouchsafed, but as that had not been done he wished to put one or two questions to the Government. If it were true that a conference was contemplated, what would the scope of that conference be? If it was going to represent a certain number of well-organised sections he was not prepared to give his adhesion to it. He would like to know whether the whole question was to be open for consideration at the conference. Would it be in the power of those who favoured a secular solution to advance their views, and to show that it offered the only abiding settlement of the question? It seemed to him that so long as they endeavoured to teach a transcendental subject like religion in the schools of the nation at the nation's expense, so long would they find that the nation was sharply divided upon this matter.

It should be clearly understood that the great mass of the people were neither Churchmen, Nonconformists, Catholics, nor Jews. The great mass of the people were not associated with any of these sects. They who advocated the secular solution were in no way opposed to religion, but merely to the State regulation of religion. They were as profoundly religious as any of those who were attached to any of the sects which had loomed large in the debate. He had never yet met any person who was proud of the name of being irreligious; he believed that all were imbued with the desire to get nearer to the Godlike and to live better lives. If they realised that the great mass of the people were not associated with any particular sect, they must find that the difficulties in the way of the solution of this question were accentuated. Furthermore, they had the fact that religious thought in the community was undergoing great changes. In these days of the higher criticism, of comparative mythology, and of the new theology, religious thought was in a state of fluidity, and it was a dangerous task for anybody to undertake to impart any specific form of religious instruction to children. That was a point which ought to heve great consideration at the hands of the Government, because it was now seriously proposed that all these sects should have the opportunity of having their particular form of religious instruction imparted at the national expense. If they were logical in this matter, they would have to concede the same right to non-religious sects also. He did not think that those who had been advocating what they called the right of the parent in this matter would be willing to concede the right of the parent to freethinkers and atheists to have their particular doctrines taught at the expense of the State. He felt that those who were attached to the Nonconformist churches were in a very peculiar position when they opposed the secular solution. It semed to him that if it was wrong to teach adults religion at the expense of the State, it was equally wrong to teach little children dogmatic religion at the expense of the State. Nonconformists were in favour of disestablishment, and if they would be logical they must also favour the secular solution of the education question. It might be said that the simple Bible teaching with which they were satisfied was not dogmatic religion, but a considerable number of people were convinced that it was dogmatic instruction. In fact it had been designated: "Nonconformity on the rates." This was another proof of the utter impossibility of reconciling the conflicting elements concerned in this question. One factor that had never been properly considered was the child itself. After all, education was a question which materially affected the children of the country, although it would not appear to be so regarded from these debates. Some consideration must be had for the powers of a child's mind to understand the things imparted to it. They were assured that religion could only be taught dogmatically. Modern education sought to induce the child to have an intelligent reason for everything it believed, but when they attempted to teach children religion they were forcing them to accept a thing that they who gave the instruction in all probability could not themselves comprehend or understand. In fact it simply meant that children in the schools were taught by rote, and they came to believe a thing because it had been constantly repeated to them. That was not a proper state of affairs. They were told also that in dealing with this question they must have regard to the exaggerated rights of parents. Sometimes he asked himself which parent was meant. In the whole of this discussion the parent was simply regarded as the man. He claimed that the woman had a right to consideration in these matters. Where a woman belonged to a different religion from the father, she has as much right to be considered as the man, and until women had the same electoral power as men he was not prepared to take the responsibility of determining which parent the child should follow in the matter of religion. The position of the Labour Party in regard to the contracting-out part of the Bill had already been clearly stated. They were strongly opposed to those proposals, and they would be compelled to give them their opposition. They hoped the proposals would not be passed into law. One virtue attaching to the Act of 1902 was that it certainly removed the conditions which starved education prior to the passing of that measure. What was good in that Act ought to be conserved. It co-ordinated education and found adequate funds for providing education, and the Labour Party were not prepared to give their adhesion to anything that would go back on that matter. It was quite true that there were grievances arising out of that measure which should be removed, and therefore they hailed with great satisfaction the Government proposals for dealing with the single school areas. If the contracting-out proposals were insisted upon the Labour Party would go with the denominationalists who demanded that the grant should be sufficient. They asked for equal grants and equal rate-aid for those schools, not because they desired to see denominationalism on the rates, but because they desired to see education regarded as a national matter, and they held that children should not be made to suffer simply because of the faith of their parents. There was nothing illogical in that, because, after all, they were claiming that the child should be taught the faith of its parents. The child was not responsible for the faith of its parents. He and his friends did not think that the child should be handicapped because of a thing of that sort. They had been told by the Leader of the Irish Party that the provisions of this Bill would place a liability estimated at £150,000 upon the Catholics of the community. The House knew full well that those Catholics who were able were not willing, and that those who were willing were unable to find that money. Therefore they knew from the outset that the money would not be forthcoming, and that in consequence the efficiency of education in the contracted-out schools must inevitably suffer. He hoped in the interest of the teachers that the contracting-out proposals would not pass into law. The Labour Party were prepared to support the Second Reading of the Bill, but he hoped that the criticism which had been passed on the contracting-out proposals would induce the Government to reconsider them. He hoped the Government would accept the advice of one of their supporters, withdraw the Bill, and redraft it without the contracting-out proposals in it. If in the end they found the solution which they proposed impossible, he trusted they would turn to the secular solution. They were told that the country would by no means accept the secular solution. He was firmly convinced that more people were turning to that solution as a matter of conviction and as a policy of despair, recognising as they did the utter impossibility of reconciling the sectarian elements in this quarrel. They knew that certain proposals in the Licensing Bill were not popular, and the Government never knew whether the country would support them in it. But the Labour Party were prepared to associate themselves with the Prime Minister in educating the people in regard to the just principles of that Bill. If the Government agreed with the Labour Party that the secular solution was the only natural solution of the education difficulty, the Labour Party asked them to go to the country, and tell the people that they were convinced that this was the only abiding solution, and the people would cast their votes in a way that would at least set the nation on the path by which peace and a permanent solution of the question would be found. They no longer wanted a continuance of sectarian squabbles, but to concentrate their endeavours on obtaining educational efficiency.

MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor) said he was very much impressed with the unreality of this debate, and he should think that a sufficient number of speeches had been delivered in every quarter of the House to convince the Government how little support this Bill really commanded. They had wasted three days of valuable Parliamentary time in discussing a Bill of which everybody disapproved. He had hoped that they would come to some satisfactory result, but that hope had been dissipated by the speeches of the President of the Board of Education and of the First Lord of the Admiralty, because neither of them attempted to defend the Bill, or to tell the House what they proposed to take its place. They on that side of the House had hoped that some compromise, some arrangement which would suit all denominations, would be foreshadowed in those speeches; but in that they had been woefully disappointed. There had been not a shadow of an insinuation of what the Government desired, and they were no nearer a settlement than before. Any attempt at agreement which had been shown at all, had come entirely from the back benches opposite, especially from the hon. Member for Carmarthen Boroughs. But, if there was to be conciliation, why were they told that contracting-out was not of the essence of the Bill? He himself was not enamoured of contracting-out; but as the Bill stood it was the only attempt to meet the requirements of the denominations. If contracting-out was to be withdrawn, he did not see where the conciliation came in. The Government were deliberately throwing down the gauntlet and denominationalists would draw the sword, and do their best to wreck the Bill with contracting-out left out, as it would be devoid of any attempt whatever to meet their just claims. He agreed that a national system would be the best; but one was inclined to ask, what was a national system? Did it mean the endowment of Cowper-Temple teaching at the expense of all other denominations? If it did, then it would not be satisfactory. The Government had not indicated in the least what they meant. The First Lord of the Admiralty had said that there was no change in the policy of the Government. They knew that the policy of the Government had been stated to be a sort of a compromise, but there was no indication as to what that compromise was. The right hon. Gentleman had repeated the old shibboleths—no tests for teachers and complete public control. As to tests for teachers, they were much interested to hear the remarks of the hon. Member for Louth, for they learned from himself and from those for whom he spoke that they were prepared to admit tests. The hon. Gentleman had said that no Roman Catholic was to be appointed to be a teacher in a Protestant school, and that no Protestant teacher was to be appointed in a Roman Catholic school. It was clear, therefore, that he contemplated tests, and he was not, intentionally or unintentionally, sincere in saying that he did not advocate tests for teachers. Then, if contracting-out continued, public control disappeared, so that the leading characteristics of the Bill were already condemned. Under these circumstances he could not imagine that the Government seriously contemplated pressing on this Bill in its present form, or indeed with its framework much changed. They were next met with the threat of the secular settlement. He did not believe in that, because he thought there were far too many people in the country—and he hoped it would always be so—who valued religious teaching too much. In his opinion, if they insisted on the exclusive endowment of Cowper-Temple teaching, that would really be the first step towards secularism, and they were likely to go on the downhill grade to secularism by excluding all denominational beliefs other than Cowper-Templarism.

MR. EDMUND LAMB (Herefordshire, Leominster) called attention to the fact that forty Members were not present.

House counted; and forty Members being found present—

MR. EVELYN CECIL said that his objection to secularism was that it meant to many of the children no religious teaching at all; and that was a point which could not be too strongly impressed on the House. If the State ignored all religious teaching the homes of many who needed religious teaching most, would be entirely destitute of it. These children who did not get it at school, would not get it anywhere else, and he shuddered to think what would be the future of the nation where the children of the poorer classes got no religious teaching, and what their morals were likely to be. He trusted they would never reach an entirely secular solution. Why should they uproot the whole law and re-model the educational system of the country in order to remedy the one grievance which the Nonconformists rightly felt—the single-school areas? Why not bring in a short Bill to remedy that difficulty? The educational system of the country had admittedly been improved by the passing of the Act of 1902. It had been largely unified, and the Act was working extremely well throughout the country. Let them begin afresh and meet this grievance of the Nonconformists—which he candidly admitted—in the single-school areas. That would be better than upsetting the whole educational system once more. The grievance could be remedied; the question was how. But if the denominational schools were to be abolished altogether, as was sometimes threatened, denominationalists would claim denominational facilities in school hours for all denominations in every school in England where the parents of a sufficient number of children, say ten, desired it. It would be absolutely necessary that they should have some safeguards to obtain the right of entry which they claimed. They were told that if they allowed facilities and the right of entry in schools the plan would be found unworkable. He did not think so, and there was much evidence to prove the contrary. He believed that it was perfectly possible to bring it about; at any rate, why not give it a trial? It worked well in Ireland, it worked well in Switzerland, where they had tried other systems first. In 1883 there was an attempt to enforce universal undenominationalism, but it was rejected by a large majority. Each canton made its own arrangements, but the religious education given in the schools must be given in accordance with the wishes of the parents and guardians, and the utmost care was taken of the religious education of the children. The same system existed in Belgium, Holland, Austria, Greece, Norway, and he believed Denmark. With all this evidence before them, was not it absurd to maintain a *non possumus* attitude and say that nothing could be done? In Canada and New South Wales facilities were given for denominational teaching.

AN HON. MEMBER They have no State Church there.

MR. EVELYN CECIL said he did not desire to put the State Church into a different position from any other. Let all churches have a right to denominational teaching in a single-school area if there were enough children to justify it. Provision, he thought, might be made by the local education authority for denominational teachers in single-school areas or general facilities should be granted in those areas. If that were tried, he ventured to prophecy it would be found to work in a perfectly satisfactory way and the grievances of Nonconformists might thereby be got over. There was another proposal which had not been sufficiently considered in the House and to which he would like to call attention. It was noteworthy that under the County Education Committee in East Suffolk a rule had been drawn up in favour of religious instruction in accordance with the spirit of the Apostles' Creed. The committee which drew up the rule consisted of three clergymen of the Church of England, two Nonconformist ministers, two Nonconformist laymen, and one Roman Catholic. In that case it was clear that a great deal of mutual good understanding had been brought about. They had been told by the Government that there was to be a conference upon this matter. The Government were not justified in asking the House to read this Bill a second time merely on the strength of a vague assertion that there might be a conference afterwards. He desired more information about the conference, if a conference there was to be—who were to compose it, what the scope of its inquiry was to be, and what the proposals were, that the Government intended to bring before it. The hon. Gentleman suggested there were two matters, would they be brought before the conference? Would the Government consider the advisability of laying down in statutory form the East Suffolk County Education Committee's rule? That would go far to meet the objections even of so strong a denominationalist as himself. Would the Government discuss the granting of facilities in single-school areas—possibly a solution of the whole difficulty? If this Bill was to be forced through the House, hon. Members must be perfectly aware of the bitter grievances under which the denominationalists would suffer. When it was realised how this Bill disregarded the work of those who for thirty-five years had been giving large sums for denominational education, and that it left the voluntary schools to languish and die and destroyed their educational efficiency, had they not good reason for complaint? The Church of England owned most of the schools in single-school areas, and therefore it was the Church that would be the most severely hit. Where was the equal treatment under the Bill? Where was the freedom of conscience? He hoped the Bill might be withdrawn, for it could not be a settlement of this controversy.

*MR. W. PEARCE (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse) said that as a London Member he did not propose to support this Bill. His difficulty arose from the fact that education in London cost so much more than it did elsewhere. For instance, for the whole of England and Wales it cost £3 5s. 9d. per child, but in London it cost £5 15s. 6d. Looking at it from the London point of view, and with all the good will in the world, he was unable to find many redeeming features in the Bill. There were 146,000 children in non-provided schools, and to-day the cost per child was 30s. in excess of the 47s. provided by the Bill. Prior to 1904, the cost was much less, and the difference of 30s. was entirely due to the handling of those schools by the County Council. In his constituency there were three or four large denominational schools, and the figures of one were so striking that he would like to give them. There were 600 children in the school, and it had been established for nearly 200 years. It was a Church of England school in the East end of London. Nobody imagined that the managers would be able to find £3,000 to put it in order to meet the demands of the London County Council, but they had done so. Since 1904, when they gave up entire control, the expenses of the school had been raised nearly £1 per head, 16s. 9d. being entirely due to the salaries of the teachers, which were over £3 per child. Besides that there were £800 worth of London County Council fixtures in the school. They, of course, were not the property of the managers, and, in case they contracted-out, they would have to be refunded to the London County Council. He had three or four of that kind of schools in his constituency, and he asked the Government how it was posible for him to tell his constituents that the proposals in the Bill were fair and reasonable so far as they were concerned? He ought to tell the House how London had been treated ever since the Parliamentary grant was made. The cost of education in London must, for obvious reasons, very much exceed the cost in any other district. The exceptional cost in London arose in three ways—the salaries of teachers, the cost of maintenance, and the provision of buildings. Something might be said as to extravagance in the cost of maintenance, but as to salaries of teachers and cost of land and building, London was in a position in which excess cost could not be avoided. One would, therefore, have thought that it would have been recognised that London had special difficulties, and that some special terms would have been made for it; but, as a matter of fact, whereas the average grant per head for the whole country was £2 0s. 6d., the grant for London was only £1 18s. 6d. per head. Was this because the system of education in London was worse than it was in the rest of the country? Nothing of the sort. The system of education in London was, if anything, better, and it was certainly more expensive. He had been a school manager in London for thirty-five years, and the education system there was by no means inferior to that in any other part of the country. He had set to work, therefore, to find out why London was getting so much less of the Exchequer Grant than the rest of the country. The grant was made up in three ways. There was the Annual Grant, the Fee Grant, and the Aid Grant. London got the worst of it in the Aid Grant. He did not know who introduced it, but he was a very astute Minister, and he had manipulated the grant to the detriment of London. He had based the grant on the produce of a penny rate. The higher the assessment of a district, therefore, the less money it received. The grant was based on 1½d. for every 2d. short of 10s. produced by a penny rate. The London Members must either have been asleep or the astute Minister of that day must have obscured the issue by the words in which he wrapped his proposal. The produce of a penny rate in London being higher than in any other part of the country, it received 2s. per child less under the grant, and it was perfectly plain that during the last sixteen or seventeen years London had been jerrymandered out of a sum of £65,000 per annum. He did not think anyone could give any reason why London should receive a less grant per school child than the remainder of England and Wales. London was treated badly. The Aid Grant was a bad precedent, and he was sorry to say it had been followed by the First Lord of the Admiralty, who introduced this Bill. He recognised that something ought to be allowed for the extra expense of education, and he proceeded to set up a system based on 2s. for the average numbers and one-third for the loan charge. It was not, however, to exceed 6s. per child. As in the case of the Aid Grant, the situation had again been manipulated against London. Except for the 6s. limitation, London would have been entitled to a grant of 9s. 6d. per child, and the 6s. limitation reduced the fund payable to London by about £115,000. As a London Member and seeing how it was proposed to treat London, he was obliged to sink his natural desire to vote for a Government measure; and, although he might be accused of parochialism, he felt that London had such a large interest at stake that he would only be doing his duty in pointing out how it was proposed to make London suffer. It would be said, in reply, that in spite of all this London would receive a grant of £200,000 and that the rates would be relieved to that amount. That was quite true, but where did the £200,000 come from? It had to be raised by taxation. London took its share in the taxation, and its share in the taxation which produced the £1,500,000 was £350,000. London therefore would pay £350,000 and get £200,000 back. Still, they were told to rest and be thankful. He was a new Member of the House but he had felt obliged to get up and make some protest with regard to the case of London. He had had a great deal to do with the administration of education in London, and he agreed with the hon. Member for Peckham, who had made a non-party speech, with regard to the administrative difficulties of the Bill. So far as London was concerned, the Bill seemed to him to have been devised without any knowledge of or regard to the educational position. He felt obliged therefore with great regret to declare that on the present occasion he could not support the Government in the Second Reading of their Bill.

MR. WYNDHAM (Dover): The hon. Member who has just addressed the House has expressed his opposition to the Bill we are supposed to be discussing. He spoke with obvious knowledge of the condition of the educational problem in London, and I think he proved, from an adminstrative point of view, that this Bill is impossible. If we except the two right hon. Gentlemen who have spoken, every single speaker who has taken part in the two days debate has, from one point of view or another, expressed his dissatisfaction with the Bill. Almost every hon. Member has accompanied that expression of dissatisfaction with an expression of expectation that the Government did not really mean it, and that they proposed, if not to-day, then to-morrow, and if not to-morrow, then upon some future occasion, either to withdraw this Bill or to go very far beyond the four corners within which it is at present contained. That expectation may be described as having been on tip-toe when the President of the Board of Education rose to speak. My hon. friend the Member for Marylebone wanted to know what the position of the Government was. We fully thought the President of the Board of Education would give us in a more detailed and convincing manner a statement of that position. The statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty was not detailed, but it was somewhat more convincing than the speech of the President of the Board of Education. The First Lord did not declare, as the President of the Board of Education did, that there has been no alteration in tone; the policy of the Government remains what it was; it is embodied in the Bill. That was not what the First Lord of the Admiralty said. He said that although he had quitted the Board of Education he was speaking because there was some change. He was not very precise as to what the charge was, but he told us that something had happened, notably that a Bill had been introduced in another place which had not yet reached the Second Reading stage, and he intimated, less clearly, that proposals for a compromise were in the air. He ended with a threat. He said that unless some body, or some bodies, also unspecified, failed to approach the question in a proper spirit, then this Bill would be taken up and proceeded with through all its stages. The threat of yesterday is the policy of to-day. It makes it very hard for any of us to take part in the discussion with any hope of usefully contributing to it. If I had believed that the President of the Board of Education had stated the policy of the Government when he said, "There is no alteration; the policy of the Government remains the same and is embodied in the Bill," I certainly should not have ventured to waste the time of the House as every speaker must be wasting it if that indeed be the policy of the Government. I suppose everyone who remembers past debates of this character feels a good deal of diffidence in approaching the subject at all. In my case, it amounts to doubt whether I can say anything of any useful purpose and almost to disgust. The difficulty is that we are discussing a question under conditions which make it hard for us either to fight our opponents, if we are opposed in this question, or to make peace with them if peace is to be made. It is hard to conduct war or to make peace in a fog. We do not know where we are, because the Government decline to tell the House where they are. Even if there were reason to believe that the President of the Board of Education had told us their policy to-day, we know that it was not the policy stated by the First Lord of the Admiralty yesterday, and we do not believe it will be the policy stated by the Prime Minister to-morrow, and even if all three of the Ministers enunciated the same policy on three days running, which would be a record in consistency, we should still remember that members of the Government have up to now contemplated five different methods of dealing with this admittedly difficult question. Before he was a member of the Government the Chief Secretary for Ireland had a very benevolent regard for what used to be called facilities all round. When a member of the Government, bringing in an Education Bill, he again and again used language which entitled us to believe that he regretted the practical difficulties of making that ideal the basis of a compromise. Then we had the Bill of 1906 adopted by the Government after contemplation and dropped. Then we had the Bill of 1907 contemplated by the Government and dropped. Then we have the Bill which we are supposed to be discussing, contemplated by the Government—we do not know whether it is going to be dropped or not; and then we have the Bill introduced in another place, contemplated by the Government, and we are not told whether they are going to adopt it or reject it. Yesterday the spokesman of the Front Bench hung up his sword and extended to us the olive branch. If you hang up a sword that is suspended over the head of the person to whom you offer the olive branch you are likely to produce an atmosphere of constraint. A proceeding, otherwise graceful, may become awkward, and it has become more awkward when this evening the next spokesman for the Government takes down the sword again and flourishes it in our face. These conditions are unusual even in a House familiar with having the rights of discussion somewhat summarily curtailed. We are quite familiar with the practice of suddenly imposing the collective mind of the Government on the House. We know that the Government in the privacy of the Cabinet have been discussing two or three alternative schemes for months, but they may have decided on the one they produced by a majority of one for all we know, and they come to the House and say: "You shall have three or six days under the guillotine, and you must accept our collective wisdom." Now they have gone a step further. They are asking the House to make up their mind for them. I very much doubt whether we can do so. Personally, I can only speak for those whom I represent, for my constituents in Dover, and those whose opinion on this matter I have had opportunities of collecting, for I have made many speeches on this subject in the country. These views were stated admirably in the brilliant maiden speech of the hon. Member for North-West Manchester, and again to-day with the great force and brilliancy to which we are accustomed by the hon. and learned Member for Walton. Those whom I represent want to keep the educational advantages which accrued under the Act of 1902. They do not want to enjoy what the President of the Board of Education called the advantages of being outside the national scheme of education; they have no leanings in that direction. But while they wish to keep these advantages, they hold that the State ought to be able to adjust the enjoyment of them to the religious needs and scruples of all persons who in this country pay taxes and rates in order that the children should receive these advantages. So it is held by a number of people in this country, far in excess of any estimate of which the Government has yet thought. There is a lull in the controversy, but no one believes that the whole policy of the Government is contained in this Bill. Perhaps we should not be wasting time if, in the lull, we reflected that what we are discussing is not education at all but the relation of the State to the various sections of the community who desire the same opportunities of secular education for their children, but wish to have those opportunities without sacrificing their religious convictions or paying more for them than other people pay for theirs. I do not think anyone would imperil the chances of ultimate peace if he were to say, as I am prepared to say, that we are making a great mistake in this matter in not consulting the views of what are called extremists. Extremists in questions of this kind are often those who have cared enough about the subject to be quite clear as to what they want, and even sometimes to know what it is that their opponents want, and you are far more likely to arrive at a lasting peace if you understand clearly the views of extremists than if you muffle them up in the amiable hopes of moderate men who have not cared about the matters in dispute. I believe there are three sets of extremists. There are those who favour the secular solution. I will call them "so-called extremists," not using the word in an offensive sense. With all respect it is not practical politics to hope that a lasting settlement can be based upon a secular solution. They are missionaries, and they will continue their propaganda, but for the moment we cannot look to their solution as the possible basis of any lasting compromise. There are only two other sets of extremists. One is that to which I belong, denominational extremists. Is our position very extreme? Our position quite briefly is that in this matter the State ought to be neutral towards all forms of religious instruction given in our schools. The position of the Nonconformists or undenominational extremists is that the State ought not to impose, but to affirm, foster, prefer, some neutral type of religious instruction which all parents ought to like even if they are so benighted as not to like it. There is a real opposition between those two views. Each may be honourably held, and what we ought to consider in this Bill is the ancient and horrid controversy as the Chief Secretary called it. Which of these views supplies the best foundation upon which an edifice of compromise could be erected? Naturally, I prefer the denominational view. I have no doubt that those who are in favour of undenominational education prefer the undenominational view. But, taking the view that the State ought to be neutral towards all forms of religious instruction in our primary schools—if you make that the foundation of your compromise, you will not be driven into contracting out. The other view is to have a sort of neutral religion as the affirmed type, and then you are driven to contracting out. The President of the Board of Education objected to some of my hon. friends saying that contracting out was the essence of this Bill. It certainly is the necessary corollary. Then, again, if this Bill passes, a large number of schools will not be satisfied with the neutral form of religious instruction, and so the co-ordinated system of education established by the Act of 1902 would be torn up again. That Act, also, for the first time in history, brought men of every religious belief into closer civic community than they had enjoyed before Civic life in all the towns of England was quickened and vivified indirectly as a consequence of the Act of 1902, and every institution outside the Government Department was brought into the collective system of the country. Such advantages as those ought not to be imperilled for a point of honour. If you take up the extreme position that there is to be one type of religious instruction fostered and preferred by the State you will have contracting out, and then you will pluck out of the civic life many of its most important members in our towns. Then, by universal admission, the view that the State should be neutral to all kinds of religious instruction is theoretically fair; and it is a great advantage to have as the basis a plan that is theoretically fair. This is only criticised upon the ground that it is hard to carry out in practice. Everybody admits that the neutrality of the State or facilities all round is theoretically a fair solution, and I think you will obtain a great advantage by taking as your basis a plan on which you will have to erect many concessions, but which is theoretically fair. Everybody has admitted that the religious difficulty exists a great deal more outside the schools than inside. I have heard the Secretary to the Admiralty assert more than once that he has entered schools and been quite unaware that there was any religious difficulty. The religious difficulty is outside the schools, and if you start as the basis of compromise with a view theoretically fair, you get the advantage that it will be harder for people outside with strong religious convictions to find a fulcrum on which they can place a lever to overturn the edifice of compromise. If you make the plan fair in its basis, parents and teachers and children, by generous facilities, can have all their needs met and all their scruples properly regarded. Let the Government start their edifice of compromise on a basis theoretically fair, which does not drive them to contracting out, and then, in a spirit of charity and generosity, they will find no difficulty at any rate with the extremists with whom I venture to associate myself. I think we are more likely to arrive at a peaceable solution if we recognise that there are two classes, those who believe that the State can foster and prefer a neutral type of religion, and those who hold that the State should be neutral in its attitude to all forms of religious instruction. If we accept the fact that those two views are held—and I very much doubt whether either party will ever surrender the view which it holds—then the only hope for a lasting peace is by a treaty between those two parties, with, of course, generous facilities to minorities. The Opposition has always held that the Act of 1902 enshrined the principles of justice and equality—a very rough justice, if you like, but it could not be claimed that the State was giving its help and assistance to one party, rather than to another. In the single-school areas we found that the Nonconformist parent and teacher had to put up with difficulties which we should have preferred to remove, but we found equally that in many large towns parents did not get for their children the education they desired. The justice is rough. Well, then, let the Government make it even, but it will cease to be justice unless they base their plan on a foundation which is just and theoretically fair.

*THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. McKINNON WOOD, Glasgow, St. Rollox) said he thought the right hon. Gentleman must have found it difficult to draw a distinction between rough justice and positive injustice, because he made the admission that the settlement of 1902 left the Nonconformist in rural districts under conditions which even the authors of the Act regretted and would like to see removed. One of the most important features of the Bill before the House was the removal of those conditions, and if there were no other reason for voting for the Second Reading he could not help thinking that was a sufficient reason, because the grievance in the rural districts was much more acute than anything experienced in large towns. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover had used words which for a long time he found a difficulty in understanding; he had said there were three sets of extremists, and he defined the denominational extremist as a person who thought that the State ought to be neutral. At last he found the right hon. Gentleman meant something quite different from neutral; he meant leaving things as they were. That was not neutrality. He could have wished that his first speech since he took office had been on a less controversial subject than this. He approached this question rather from the point of view of an administrator. He saw on the other side of the House a distinguished educationist in the hon. Member for the University of London. He recalled the days when they worked as colleagues on the committee which started the system of public technical education in the metropolis. In regard to that work they had a free hand, and they had no party strife. They never inquired as to the religious denomination of anyone, and the result was that they were only limited in the development of education by the possibilities of the circumstances connected with the workmen and others whom they desired to benefit, and by the money at their disposal. When the administration of elementary education was put into the same hands, the question was surrounded by the religious controversy, and the same free co-operation became impossible. Although he desired to approach the question as an administrator, he would be misunderstood if it was supposed that he desired to minimise the questions of conscience involved in this controversy, or that he took up a position of indifference in regard to those questions. He was convinced by his experience in the administration of education that the present position rendered it very difficult, and in some cases impossible, for a person who merely desired without regard to other considerations to deal out even-handed justice to those engaged in the administration of education to do that fairly to all the people concerned. He did not desire to go into details in this matter, but the question of the promotion of teachers on a fair basis as between Nonconformists and members of the Church of England raised insuperable difficulties in our great towns, because not only had they many schools confined to the teachers of one denomination while all the other schools were open, but the initial selection gave the teachers who had that advantage a further advantage in the case of other schools which were free to all. It was very unsatisfactory that these difficulties should be allowed to continue, and the present position stood in the way of the development of education itself. Neither the member of the public authority nor the official was able to give his mind freely to educational interests without being trammelled by all sorts of other considerations. In fact, the educationist was very much in the position of the Jews, when they rebuilt Jerusalem; he had to build his educational Jerusalem with a trowel in one hand and a sword in the other. That difficulty was by no means confined to this House. It cropped up in every council and in every education committee room. He did not object to these matters of controversy being fought out in Parliament, but what he did object to was that the administrator was constantly hampered by questions of religious and party strife in carrying out the work of looking after the interests of the children. Everybody admitted that the case was much more serious in the rural districts. The more they appreciated the growing desire of the great religious denominations to work together harmoniously in certain matters, the more they must desire the removal of this controversy, which was the cause of difference and division; and the leaders of the Church and of Nonconformity, who had recently been making efforts to bring about a peaceful solution of this question, seemed to him to deserve the thanks of the country and of that House. He could not help expressing deep regret at remarks made in the debate in a tone which he could only describe as one of contemptuous reproach. The tone of the First Lord of the Admiralty, in opening the debate was conciliatory, he did not think that was denied, but the noble Lord who moved the rejection of the Bill ignored the conciliatory spirit of his right hon. friend. The noble Lord made two remarks which ought naturally to have led up to the consideration of an amicable settlement of this question. He admitted the grievance of the single school areas, and he said that the sectarian trouble existed rather on the platform than in the schools. If those two things were true, they were strong reasons for putting an end to this controversy. Yet he contented himself with criticism of the Bill exactly as it stood. In regard to the criticism of the contracting out clause he had to point out that the principle had been supported by the Party opposite. The right hon. Member for Dover criticised it, but his name appeared in the division list as supporting it in 1906. It was on a Motion by the hon. Member for Preston which proposed a very wide scheme of contracting out. But the speech of the noble Lord was "sweet reasonableness" itself compared with that of the new Member for North-West Manchester, a speech so much approved by hon. Members opposite that they had scarcely ceased to cheer it yet. Every reference to it called forth approving cheers, and therefore he took it that that speech represented the views of hon. Gentlemen opposite. The hon. Member claimed to represent the whole of Lancashire, but there were many thousands who would repudiate the claim. He used one curious phrase. He said he represented the parents, and since then he had been wondering whom the hon. Member thought that Members on the Government side of the House represented. The conclusion of the hon. Member's speech—the most significant part of it—he delivered in the true Cambyses vein, calling on his Party, as if he were leader, to postpone and hinder a settlement until they were in power and able to dictate terms from the Treasury Bench. Well, neither party could settle this question by dictating terms. The right hon. Gentleman opposite tried to settle it in this way in 1902, but the Government now were taking a more excellent way and trying to bring about a reasonable and amicable settlement. He could only regret that they had not received encouragement from the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As a Bill it led to a settlement.

Mr. McKinnon Wood

***Mr. McKINNON WOOD** said that the First Lord of the Admiralty stated quite clearly yesterday that the Government were pledged to certain root principles within which they were perfectly willing to discuss terms of accommodation. What had impressed him most in the debate had been that, with few exceptions, they had heard little of purely educational interests in the matter. There were exceptions—his hon. friend the Member for Peckham, his hon. friend the Member for Leicester, and the hon. Member for the Middleton Division of Lancashire—but as a rule they had heard discussion of everything but education, and the right hon. Gentleman who spoke last justified this and said they were discussing not education but the duty of the State in regard to religious opinions. In his view, that was a great misfortune. The hon. Member for Leicester had criticised the Bill with great reasonableness from his own point of view, put had accepted the Bill as a basis for a settlement. The secular proposal might cut certain awkward knots, but he thought the hon. Member was mistaken in thinking it would be generally accepted as a solution. It had been tried in the Colonies for years, but there was a revolt against it, and the Parliament of Queensland had recently passed an Act for referring to the people by way of referendum the question of admitting the Bible into the schools of the Colony. Out of this long controversy some points of general agreement had emerged. He did not say universal agreement after the speech of the hon. Member for North-West Manchester, but general agreement. Distinguished leaders of the Party opposite and of the Church admitted the grievances of Nonconformists in rural districts; and he would appeal to hon. Members on the Government side who differed from some of the provisions of the Bill to remember that one of its most important objects was the removal of these very grievances in the rural districts. An hon. Member opposite said they did not desire peace at any price. Nor did the Government. There were certain root principles which had been authoritatively stated by the Prime Minister to which the Government firmly adhered; but they had shown a very open mind in regard to questions of machinery not only in dealing with this Bill but in the Bill of 1906. His right hon. friend the Chief Secretary for Ireland had made concessions in regard to machinery in the 1906 Bill of which he thought hon. Members opposite did not quite appreciate the value until the chance of accepting them was gone. He thought the speech of his right hon. friend in regard to this Bill showed that the Government was animated by the same spirit. They did not desire a truce; but they did desire an enduring peace. They did not desire to approach the question in a spirit of bargaining; but they thought it their duty to seek peace and ensue it in the interests of education; and, if that spirit were met with contempt as he thought it had largely been met in the course of the debate, the responsibility of failure would not be upon them, but upon those who refused the offer of compromise. He believed that outside the House there were thousands of men belonging to all Churches and both parties who would support the Government in any endeavour to bring about a settlement of the question which would enable them all, to whatever sect or party they might belong, to join together to establish and build up a system of education which they were all agreed was one of the most vital of national interests.

*MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry) said he felt very considerable difficulty in appearing in the debate, for it was almost impossible for anyone who desired a settlement of the question to say anything in the way of improving the present situation. The hon. Gentleman who spoke last and who said he represented the Government, had stated that they were not prepared to approach this question in a spirit of bargain. If that was the case, how did they ask hon. Members to support a spirit of compromise? How could there be a compromise if there was to be no spirit of bargaining? The hon. Gentleman had also praised the efforts made by the people outside—the leaders of the Church and of Nonconformity to reach a compromise. What efforts had the Government made to-night to bring about peace? The attitude of the Government had been this: directly any attempt was made by the Opposition to discuss this Bill they were told they were refusing a compromise. But many others held the views that he did, that it was impossible to arrive at a fair settlement on these lines. If it was admitted that it was right that they should institute a system of religion to be taught in all the schools of the country, how could it be right to do it without paying anything for the schools they were going to take? Again, with regard to public control, if it was the wish of the public in a particular district that such religious instruction should take place, how could it be right to take the school away, and say to the 100 per cent. of parents who wished their children to go on that in the interests of the whole the one thing they wanted most must be taken away? The right hon. Gentleman had observed that a great deal might be done by giving £1,500,000 of public money towards carrying out the purposes of the Bill. The hon. Member for Leicester welcomed what he believed was going to be a great contribution to the rates, but, so far as he could himself see from the figures worked out for him, the result would be that Shropshire would have to find £9,000, which meant that they must impose a 2d. rate. The contributions which were made did not cover the question of upkeep of fabric, of repairs of schools, and so forth. Those expenses were always ignored by hon. Gentlemen opposite who desired to criticise the Act of 1902. And, from that point of view, that would be a heavy loss to the county councils. Although he firmly believed that it was the duty of the Government to give more money to education, he could not help thinking that the First Lord of the Admiralty would have met the wishes of the country, if after providing for medical inspection he had devoted the rest of the money, which he proposed to vote to the destruction of the Church schools, to the construction of a new battleship. They all recognised the Nonconformist grievance in single school areas, but it could be remedied without imposing a still greater grievance on other people. The Government could only settle this question by approaching it in a spirit of fair play.

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.) said that the one element in the whole of this debate was whether the unification of elementary education in this country was valuable or not. If it was, then this Bill was a wise one. If, on the other hand, the unification of elementary education was not a matter worthy of achievement, then this Bill was an unwise one. Upon that the whole question turned. If a dual or multiple system did not handicap us, then this debate was merely the discussion of small jealousies between cliques of the wealthy governing classes, for with the exception of the Catholics and the Jews there was no strong popular opinion on the subject. If the unification of our elementary education was worthy of achievement then the Bill was wise. Unification of elementary education had been preached by every educationist worthy of the name in every civilised country in the world. It was unification of elementary education under one bureaucratic control that transformed Germany into what she is. They need not go for illustrations to those who were not and never could be our rivals. They had better far to go to our great trade rivals, France and Germany. He was not now speaking of "higher education," the condition of which in this country was past praying for, or of secondary education which did not exist, but of our elementary education which differed from that of all our great rivals. There was, he thought, no one who cared for the results of elementary education in the modern state who would not wish to see a simple and united system, and the House would agree with him when he said that the mistakes of modern elementary education had been enormous. He was too young to have witnessed the change, but men of the previous generation who had witnessed it, men of the most diverse sorts, men in the rural districts, men in the great manufacturing towns, and men who had seen the industrial rise of modern Germany, had all come to the conclusion that modern compulsory free elementary education had changed the face of Europe. Were we abreast of our rivals? So long as we kept the multiple or dual system, it was universally admitted among experts that we were not. Could we establish a universal system in this country? He was quite certain that if those who had taken the matter in hand in a practical way on the local councils, and especially on the London County Council, thought that ideal possible, they would say, "Let us establish to-morrow a united system with central control,"—allowing, of course, largely for local difference, and that local spirit peculiar to the life of this people. But could they establish it? There was only one rock upon which it was practicable for it to exist. They would make the territorial squires angry if they established it in the rural districts, and they would make a certain number of archæological ecclesiastics very angry if they established it in the towns. There was, however, only one mass of opinion at the present moment opposed to it, and that was the body of his co-religionists. There was no other organised body in Great Britain which consistently, in all ranks of society and under all circumstances, put faith before mundane matters. Let those who were afraid to call a spade a spade ask themselves who of their Jewish friends or acquaintances, upon making a considerable sum of money, hesitated to send their sons to an Anglican school, or who of the Jewish community upon achieving a place in society hesitated to send their sons to Eton or Harrow. At enormous sacrifice, at the sacrifice of the opportunity and advantage of community with the national life, his co-religionists maintained for three generations, two generations most actively, even amongst their wealthier members a system of a separate education. So long as that intense feeling existed, so long would this obstacle to a complete national system exist also. The House had heard from the hon. Member for Bradford a short and most eloquent appeal. He spoke, not as a member of their communion, but as representing certain constituents, and he had given facts and figures which were surely sufficiently striking. Could they pretend that their differences in theological opinions compared in any way with that intense fervour which made poor men sacrifice 5s. per week and which made the poor in the slums of our great industrial cities build their schools, endow their altars, and beautify their churches? That was a peculiar phenomenon which they met in modern England, and undoubtedly but for it every practical man would adopt some one united system and would, therefore, favour the secular system. That point had to be met, and he confessed the best and most practicable method seemed to him to be some such rule as was adopted in 1906—a rule that four-fifths or some very large proportion of the parents should be allowed to give to a school an exceptional position. They had often heard that that was a clause introduced merely for the Catholics. It was a clause introduced for any body of men who cared enough to send their children on a rainy day some distance to school instead of to the nearest school, for any body of parents who had sufficient grip upon their fanciful philosophy to make it the principal thing in their lives. It was simply because the Catholics were an exceptional body in the State that it applied to them. He agreed with it and spoke in favour of it in the North of England, where, especially in Lancashire, there was controversy on the Bill. He said, and would say again, that it was a statesmanlike solution of the difficulty. There was no doubt that the Bill introduced by the present Chief Secretary for Ireland was a statesmanlike solution of the education difficulty. Men differed as to how it was wrecked. The hon. Member for Mayo told them that it was wrecked by the Nonconformist extreme opinion. He was not of that opinion. He thought it was wrecked by the House of Lords.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned. Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

EMPLOYMENT OF MILITARY IN CASES OF DISTURBANCES.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed (1) to inquire into the power possessed by Civil Authorities to obtain Military aid in the suppression of Disturbance, and to consider whether those powers ought to be subjected to any and what modification or restriction; (2) further to inquire into the duties and responsibilities now attaching to Military officers in these cases, and to consider whether it is expedient that these duties and responsibilities should be further defined.

Committee accordingly nominated of,—Sir Frederick Banbury, Mr. Chance, Mr.

Curran, Mr. Devlin, Mr. Lambton, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Paulton, Mr. Albert Stanley, and Mr. Middlebrook.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

EMPIRE DAY.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) said that at Question-time the Prime Minister said that he had not yet received from any quarter sufficient proof of the breadth and extent of the movement for the recognition of Empire Day to induce him to depart from the policy laid down by his predecessors. He felt that such a challenge should not be allowed to go disregarded, and he would therefore venture, in a few words, to put before the right hon. Gentleman at any rate some of the reasons why he should consider whether he should not depart from the policy hitherto followed. That was his sole excuse for detaining the House a few moments. The movement had been growing in importance and size during the last five years throughout the Empire, and it was especially recognised in Canada, where it originated. A very good answer to the contention that it was not recognised by the late Government was that it had made remarkable progress during the last three years and was very much larger than when the present Government came into office. Its object was to instil into the people, and especially the children, a love of the British Empire; and it was a purely non-political movement. It was generally supported throughout the Empire; it was growing very largely in this country; and, without discussing the relative merits of commercial and sentimental bonds, they appealed with confidence to the Government, at any rate to give consideration to it, especially having regard to the fact that they at all times had regarded the sentimental bond between the mother country and the Colonies as of the greatest importance. If there was any movement which could strengthen that bond, it was this; and as the Prime Minister had, in his answer to their Questions, shown a tinge of sympathy in the matter, he respectfully appealed to him to give the matter consideration, so that even if he was unable to come to any decision this year, the present policy might in the future be altered and some official cognisance taken of that day.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I do not in the least complain of the course the noble Lord has taken. I am delighted, but I am not surprised to hear that during the last three years the sentiment of Imperial patriotism and the common spirit and loyalty throughout the Empire has grown to dimensions previously unknown, and to that extent no doubt it is true there has been a change in the situation since the present Government has had the honour to assume responsibility. I admit that that is a very important factor and ought to be borne in mind in dealing with the question. I can assure the noble Lord that if he and his friends will convey to me from time to time such information as is at their disposal of the growth of a general desire for this particular form of manifestation or demonstration of patriotism on the part of children or adults—of those who are common citizens of the Empire to which we belong, it will be received with the most respectful consideration.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at thirteen minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 20th May, 1908.

The Lord Crawshaw.—Sat first in Parliament after the death of his father.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Standing Orders Committee.—Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for a Bill by the Honourable Artillery Company ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to introduce the Bill.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for a Bill by the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Company ought to be dispensed with.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for additional provision in the Sligo and Arigna Railway Bill ought not to be dispensed with.

That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for a Bill by the Newry, Keady, and Tynan Railway Company ought not to be dispensed with.

Read, and agreed to.

Barry Railway Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with amendments.

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill; Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction Railway; Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction Railway; and East and West Junction Railway (Amalgamation) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with amendments.

Bristol Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill; Upton Town Hall Bill [H.L.]; Rochester Bridge Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with amendments.

Knott End Railway Bill; Dartford Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Dundalk Urban District Council Bill.—Reported, without amendment.

Rhymney Railway Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with amendments. The said amendments considered, and agreed to.

North Eastern Railway Bill.—Report from the Select Committee, That the Committee had not proceeded with the consideration of the Bill, the opposition thereto having been withdrawn; read, and ordered to lie on the Table. The Orders made on 13th and 14th May last discharged, and Bill committed for Wednesday next.

Tollemache Estate Bill [H.L.]; Leeds Corporation Bill; Cheshire Lines Committee Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed.

Margate Corporation Bill.—Read 2ª, and committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly and Burry Port Water Board Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Committee of Selection, That the Lord Saye and Sele be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bills in the place of the Earl of Albemarle; read, and agreed to.

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Lord Haversham be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bill in the place of the Lord Kintore (*E. Kintore*); and that the Lord Haversham be Chairman of the said Committee; read, and agreed to.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª (according to order).

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRADE REPORTS: ANNUAL SERIES.

No. 3999. Siam (Monthons of Saiburi and Puket).

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

INDIA (RAILWAYS).

Report of the Committee on Indian Railway Finance and Administration.

RAILWAY RETURNS.

Return relating to the railways of the United Kingdom for the year 1907: Preliminary statement.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [H.L.].

Report from the Joint Committee (with proceedings of the Committee) made, and to be printed (No. 73).

Bill reported with amendments; and committed to a Committee of the Whole House, and to be printed as amended. (No. 74.)

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Order of the Day read for the consideration of Commons' Message.

*THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of ONSLOW): My Lords, before your Lordships agree to the Message of the House of Commons and appoint a Committee of five Lords to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider this Bill, I should like to say a word or two on the position of this Joint Committee as it appears to me. A statement was made in the other House by the Minister in charge of the Bill that the Second Reading which the House had given to the Bill must be assumed to carry with it the determination on the part of the House that the interests in the Port of London should be purchased. That, of course, was quite within the competence of the other House, but when they ask your Lordships to join in a Joint Committee I think it is necessary that we should regularise our position in the matter. I am aware that in the year 1903 a similar Committee was proposed, and was presided over by my noble friend Lord Cross. Lord Cross, I think, agreed that after the declaration which had been made by the President of the Board of Trade, then Mr. Gerald Balfour, in terms almost identical with the declaration made this session in the House of Commons, it was not desirable that the Committee should enter into the question of the purchase of the interests in the Port of London. I do not know what may happen if your Lordships agree to this Joint Committee. I think it extremely likely that the Committee will decide in the same way—namely, that this is a matter into which they need not inquire, as obviously if they should inquire into it and decide that it is not desirable His Majesty's Government would not proceed with the Bill. But all I wish to do in asking your Lordships to join with the other House in this Committee is to say that the Members of this House must have a perfectly free hand, and be allowed to go into that Committee to inquire into every part of the Bill. This House cannot be bound by a decision or instruction of the other House; but, as I have already said, in all probability the Committee will come to a unanimous decision in the first instance as to whether or not they will consider the question of purchase. Therefore I can confidently recommend your Lordships to join with the Committee of the House of Commons to consider this Bill.

Moved, "That the Commons Message be considered."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: My Lords, I think the noble Earl the Lord Chairman has done quite right in calling your Lordships' attention to this matter, because it involves an important principle. One of the characteristics of this House which is most useful to the country is the well-known impartiality of its Private Bill Committees, and this Bill deals with private interests though in form it occupies the position of a public Bill. The noble Earl, I think, told us that the House of Commons, at the instance of the Government, have assented to the principle of the Bill.

THE EARL OF ONSLOW: The principle of purchase in the Bill.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: That is, they have agreed to the main principle in the Bill. In that case it is quite possible that the members who may be appointed on this Joint Committee by the other House may consider it their duty to vote against any inquiry into the principle of purchase. On the other hand, the five Members who will be appointed by your Lordships' House will, of course, be in a perfectly free position. This House has, I believe, always objected to giving even an instruction to a Committee. When we deal with a private Bill the reading of it a second time is a merely formal proceeding for the purpose of enabling the Committee subsequently to inquire into the points with regard to which opposition has arisen. I believe there are petitions against the Bill, and it is quite possible they may not have any *locus standi* to appear before the Committee. That evidently is a matter which the Committee will have to decide. In what position will our five representatives find themselves? The five representatives of the House of Commons may very likely consider themselves bound to vote against any inquiry into the principle of purchase. Our five representatives may wish to consider whether the petitioners against the principle of purchase have, or have not, a right to appear before them. The voting in that case, supposing the five Peers to take that view, would be a tie, and as the course of procedure in this House is always adopted on Joint Committees it will depend on the way in which the Question is put whether the opponents have, or have not, an opportunity of even urging their case before the Committee at all. Suppose, on the other hand, that this matter were dealt with first in one House and then in the other by ordinary Committees. In that case, of course, the five Peers would have a free and independent opportunity, without being hampered by five votes already committed. They would have an opportunity of deciding what should be done. It seems to me that in this way this Joint Committee, so far as your Lordships are concerned, will be more or less hampered in its proceedings. The noble Earl the Lord Chairman has said that he feels pretty confident they will arrive at one decision. I daresay he has more knowledge of this matter than I have, for I have no knowledge at all; but suppose that he is wrong. I think this House will then be in rather an awkward position. As, however, the noble Earl advises your Lordships that the matter should be referred to a Joint Committee, I do not wish to oppose his Motion; but, at the same time, I think this is a matter which requires, at all events, notice on the part of this House, if it does not require a *caveat* against similar proceedings in future.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I did not know that the noble Earl the Chairman of Committees was going to raise this point, or I would have endeavoured to refresh my memory on the whole subject. But, as the noble Earl opposite knows very well, and as the noble Earl the Chairman of Committees knows, if possible, better still, there is an absolute precedent for this proceeding in what was done by the late Government with reference to the purchase of the water companies' undertakings. At that time a Joint Committee was formed, of which I happened to be a member, and the very thing which the noble Earl dreads occurred in that Committee. A decision was taken which was not in accord with the desire of the Local Government Board, of which Mr. Long was at that time the head. We were then told that it was not within the competence of the Committee to deal in any way with the principle of the Bill. That was the instruction we got from Mr. Long, through Lord Balfour who was chairman of the Committee; and on the strength of that when the disputed point ultimately came to be voted upon, and there was a tie, Lord Balfour, as the noble Earl has indicated, put the question in the way which carried out his view. That may point—I am not sure it does not point—to a Joint Committee not being an ideal way of dealing with these matters at all; but as it was adopted in that case, and as the Bill became law, it seems to me hardly reasonable to raise any objection to a similar procedure on this occasion. As a matter of fact, I should hope, from what the noble Earl has said, that no difficulty is likely to arise on the question of purchase, because I understand that all the vendors have agreed to the proposed terms.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

Moved, "That a Committee of Five Lords be appointed to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider the said Bill."—(*The Earl of Onslow.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to, and ordered accordingly.

PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH rose "to call attention to recent changes which have been made in the tariffs of the self-governing Colonies for promoting their economic development and the extension of their trade relations with the United Kingdom and foreign countries, and the desirability of increasing the productive power of the Mother Country and the Empire as a whole by the arrangement of reciprocal preferences; and to move for Papers."

The noble Duke said: My Lords, in previous debates on this subject which I have ventured to initiate in your Lordship's House, noble Lords have spoken with great moderation, and I desire on the present occasion, in again bringing the matter to your notice, to approach the question in that spirit. I think the present is not an inopportune moment for this country once again to review the position in which we stand towards our Colonies and colonial trade. It is a subject in which the people of the country take a deep interest; it is a subject upon which Colonial Ministers themselves have expressed their opinion; it is a subject upon which the colonists hold strong views; it is a subject, therefore, which can never be totally ignored by the Government of the day. Moreover, some time has elapsed since the Colonial Conference, and we are at greater liberty to discuss the views as then expressed of the Colonial Ministers and the policy of His Majesty's Government. Perhaps the most important consideration of all is that during the last year considerable alterations have been made in the tariffs of some of the self-governing Colonies—I refer to Canada, New Zealand and Australia—and, in particular, an important trade convention between Canada and France has, to some extent, marked a new departure in the financial and political policy of the Dominion. These considerations, taken together in an accumulated form, justify once more a review of the position in regard to the economic development and extension of our trade.

Let me consider quite briefly the question of preference. What is it that we seek to obtain from the results of preference? It is an increase of the volume of trade within the Empire, with its increase of profit and consequent greater capacity of production among the communities within the Empire. A simple illustration will bear out my point. The excess of imports over exports amounts to over £120,000,000 per annum. The needs of the Empire are not supplied by it to the extent of that figure. When we claim that preference has been beneficial we desire to point out that the volume of Empire trade has been increasing, and that commodities have been exchanged within it which, without the stimulating influence of preference, might have been furnished from countries outside. Let me draw attention to the result of the preference which Canada has given to us. The imports of Canada from Great Britain, which noble Lords will remember had fallen between 1890 and 1897 when there was no preference, have gradually increased under the stimulus of preference till to-day these imports are nearly double what they were in 1890. Your Lordships may remember what the present Chancellor of the Exchequer said at the Colonial Conference, when he expressed his view upon the result of the preference which Canada had given to us. He said—

> "Let me here express for the Board of Trade, whose duty it is to watch carefully all that affects our trade in all parts of the world, our appreciation of the enormous advantages conferred upon the British manufacturer by the preference given to him in the Colonial market by recent tariff adjustments. The Canadian preferential tariff has produced a marked effect on our export trade to Canada. It is true that it seems to have benefited Canada even to a larger extent than it has profited us, for I observe from our trade returns that our purchases from the Canadian producer have increased and are still increasing by leaps and bounds. . . . I attribute the great improvement in the trade between Canada and this country very largely to the wise policy of reducing the duty on goods imported from the mother country, which Sir Wilfrid Laurier initiated in 1897. It has undoubtedly stimulated trade between the two countries."

*THE EARL OF CREWE: Hear, hear.

THE DUKE OF MARLBOROUGH: I am very glad to hear the noble Earl the Leader of noble Lords opposite say "Hear, hear," because I remember that when the subject of Colonial preference was discussed a year or two ago noble Lords opposite were at great pains to show that the preference which Canada had granted to us was of very little value. Indeed, some noble Lords asserted that it was of no value at all; and it is a great satisfaction to find that events have proved that the views held on this side of the House were right and that those expressed by noble Lords on the other side of the House were wrong.

I have dealt at some length with the preference that Canada has given to this country, and for this reason, that of the vast trade between this country and Canada, representing some £12,000,000 or £13,000,000 per annum, 75 per cent. goes direct in wages into the pockets of the working classes of this country. It is, furthermore, estimated that the increased trade of this country, as the result of Canadian preference, would have been sufficient to employ all these years a community of the size of Brighton, or, I may say, equal in population to Dundee. I think it is admitted on both sides of the House that the preference which Canada has given to us has been of benefit, and if any noble Lord wishes to examine the matter at greater length he will find it set forth in the Report of Mr. Grigg, which was laid on the Table of your Lordships' House at the beginning of this year.

I desire to take your Lordships a step further and remind you of the position of New Zealand and the preference which she has granted to this country and to the sister Colonies. As noble Lords are aware, British Possessions possess three-quarters of the trade of New Zealand. In pointing out to your Lordships the advantages of the New Zealand tariff of 1903 I do not think I can do better than quote the financial results which Mr. Jeffery admits in his Report. On page 11 of that Report he gives a summary in which he shows that British trade has increased at a far greater rate than foreign frade with New Zealand; and the conclusions at which he arrives are as follows—

> "The figures as a whole suggest that the effect of the preferential agreement has been to divert to the United Kingdom and British Possessions a portion of the trade formerly held by foreign countries in commodities affected by the preference, and in particular in the last year the United Kingdom and British Possessions were enabled to secure the whole of the increase in the imports of these commodities—about 22 per cent. of the total imports into New Zealand."

Again, on page 14, he says—

> "In spite, however, of constant American rivalry and continued German efforts, British merchants and manufacturers dominate the New Zealand markets."

Therefore it will be seen that the New Zealand preference has been of very great benefit to Imperial trade. Formerly New Zealand gave a preference to this country by increasing the duties against the foreigner without lowering them against British goods, but in the revision of her tariffs last year she gave a slight reduction of the duties on goods coming from the United Kingdom; and I think we may consequently look forward to a further increase of trade between the Colony and the Mother Country.

Owing to the South African War, and incidents connected with the war, it has not yet been possible to form any just estimate of the results of the preference granted by South Africa; and so far as I am aware there are no Parliamentary Papers on which we can form any accurate estimate. In the case of Australia, it was only last year that the Colony in her new tariff arrangement gave this country a preference. Under the old order of things the foreign trade of Australia had grown in greater proportionate rate than the British trade, and it is to be hoped that that unfortunate state of things will improve as a result of the preference which we now possess. I need not dwell upon the effect of inter-Colonial trade itself, that is to say, the preference which one Colony has given to another. The result of that arrangement has been highly beneficial to Empire trade, and any noble Lord who has any doubt on that matter need only refer to the proceedings at the Colonial Conference where he will find that the then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies asserted that the results of inter-Colonial trade had been highly beneficial to the Empire.

I have ventured to remind you this afternoon of the benefit of the preference which Canada and New Zealand have given to us, and also of the fact that trade between the Colonies themselves has progressed under that system. May I, quite briefly, dwell on the Imperial problem which lies before us and its possible solution? It has been suggested that a Customs union might be devised. This is impracticable, because it involves a uniform tariff, an Imperial Exchequer, and the assimilation of the internal systems of taxation of the various parts of the Empire. There is another view which appeals to some—that each constituent State, while arranging its tariff to suit its own need, might admit the commodities of every other State of the Empire duty free. I think this is equally impracticable, because the Colonies would not have sufficient revenue to discharge the obligations and requirements of their respective Governments. There is a third solution. In my view the foundation stone of the ultimate aim of free trade within the Empire is to be found in a system of preference, by which each State should arrange its tariff from the point of view of its own internal necessities; and on the basis of this tariff should give such lower rates of duty, or exemption from duty, as may be practicable to other parts of the Empire with the direct object of stimulating internal Imperial trade. Is it possible for us in any way to participate in such a policy? I think it must be apparent that the revenue needed by this country for schemes of social reform, to which noble Lords opposite are committed, and the many other liabilities connected with the administration of government, to which I need not allude, can no longer be raised on the basis of an increase of direct taxation. The probability of duties having to be imposed for the purposes of revenue is, therefore, a probability to which many noble Lords are alive and to which few, indeed, demur. Moreover, as has often been pointed out by the noble Marquess the Leader of noble Lords on this side of the House, in negotiations for commercial treaties this country is seriously handicapped by having nothing to offer in return for what foreign countries may offer to us. I do not think that those views, put forward by the noble Marquess with that clearness and exactness of expression of which he is such a formidable exponent, have lost their weight or escaped the recollection of noble Lords in this House. The conclusion, therefore, to which we are forced is that, either for the sake of revenue or in order to strengthen our hands in foreign negotiations, duties will have to be imposed which will be subject to differentiation between the Colonies and foreign countries. From whatever point of view you approach this great problem, whatever economic view you may hold and desire to support, the possibility of granting our Colonies a trade preference must be ever present to the consideration of any British Cabinet, and judging from the opinion of the Colonial Ministers, the colonists themselves, and the vast volume of growing opinion in this country, it is a consideration which no British Government can afford to ignore. As is well known, the Unionist Party have no intention of ignoring it. We are prepared to wait our time. But facts are presented to our notice which make us believe that the present condition of affairs may be reversed, and the foreign trade of our Colonies developed to the detriment of Imperial trade during the tenure of office of noble Lords opposite, and that this might retard, and possibly prevent, future Imperial co-operation and Imperial trade reciprocity.

The present Government came into power pledged to support the principle of free imports, and to decline in any way to consider Imperial reciprocity. That policy found its full and true expression at the Colonial Conference last year, when His Majesty's Ministers declined even to consider any attempt to form economic arrangements within the Empire. The Canadian Ministers, therefore, having conclusive proof that further discussion was of no use, and no doubt with the platform oratory of the then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies still ringing in their ears, proceeded to Paris and entered into a trade Convention with France. How does this tariff between

Canada and France affect Great Britain and her trade? In the first place, the intermediate tariff granted by Canada to France reduced the advantages we had over foreign countries in the trade in those articles of commerce in which we had a preference to the extent of the difference between the intermediate and the general tariff; and, in the second place, the basis of the intermediate tariff itself has been departed from. Canada has lowered her duties on certain commodities, making them almost equivalent to the preferential tariff which we now enjoy. The list of these commodities is given in Schedule C. of the Convention, and is set forth in the Parliamentary Paper which noble Lords opposite know very well indeed.

I would like to call the special attention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Article XI. of the Convention—the article dealing with favoured-nation treatment. As a result of that clause, I understand that the advantages of the intermediate tariff and the additional advantages set forth in Schedule C. are extended to all countries entitled to favoured-nation treatment at the hands of the United Kingdom under treaties to which Canada is a party. What will be the effect of this treaty upon this country? I will give your Lordships one simple illustration. Among the countries entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment are Japan and Switzerland, formidable competitors with us in certain classes of commodities which we and they send to Canada. Take, for example, the silk trade. In 1906, Japan and Switzerland each sent over half a million dollars worth of silk to Canada; Great Britain sent one and a half million dollars worth; of lace and embroidery Switzerland sent in 1906 over half a million dollars worth to Canada; the share Great Britain sent was about one million dollars worth. I understand that to-day, as a result of Clause XI. of the Convention between Canada and France, the advantages of the preference which we have enjoyed are no longer apparent, because the preference has been reduced to as low a figure as 2½ per cent. Our silk trade with Canada has been a growing trade, upon which we had prided ourselves that we were beating the foreigner "hand over fist." The bright prospects which we had in store have, however, now been removed. I venture to think that it will be small satisfaction to the manufacturers and artisans of Spitalfields, Macclesfield, and Nottingham to know that although they may lose their trade with Canada, all is really well because when they reach the age of seventy they will be remembered by a munificent Liberal Administration.

May I be allowed to take your Lordships one step further? In making this Convention with France the Canadian Government naturally expect to reap something in return, but in doing so they have given advantages to a number of countries without getting any in return. Our minds naturally turn to Germany. Under the additional advantages set forth in Schedule C., Germany will have an advantage over trade from Great Britain with Canada to an extent which I hardly like to contemplate. The effect upon our trade in this country and the effect upon Imperial trade is so obvious that I do not think I need labour the point further; and all this may happen in the near future when the taxpayer of this country may be asked to bear further burdens in order to maintain armaments against a foreign Power to whom you may shortly be going to offer the fruits of your Imperial trade and commerce. At the Colonial Conference Dr. Jameson uttered these warning words—

> "When once you begin to make treaties outside the Empire there is no saying how far you may go. When you once get commercial sympathies, you generally find political sympathies follow."

And this observation brings me to yet one more consideration. Once it is clear that Canada can offer exceptional trade advantages there is no earthly reason why her example should not be followed by New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia. We may be in the position of seeing our other Colonies making trade Conventions with the European nations, and the result will be that their foreign trade will develop at the expense of Imperial trade, and the very foundation upon which Imperial reciprocity could have been built up will have been impaired, and the object of Imperial statecraft will be frustrated certainly for a generation, perhaps, indeed, for all time. It is with these considerations in my mind that I think His Majesty's Ministers deserve to have their actions carefully scrutinised and examined. Did His Majesty's Government make any representations to Canada pointing out the disadvantages that would ensue to Imperial trade if the Convention were made? Did they hold out a single finger to dissuade the Canadian Ministers from carrying out their intention? In the absence of information from His Majesty's Government, we are forced to the conclusion that it was a matter of very little concern to His Majesty's Government that Canada should enter into a trade Convention with France, thereby diverting Imperial trade towards a foreign channel.

At the time the Convention was drawn up and ratified in Paris the British representative there was Sir Francis Bertie. Did His Majesty's Ministers, through their representative, point out to Canada that the result of this Convention would be to give favoured-nation treatment to twenty foreign countries? If they did point it out, what was the reply of the Canadian Ministers? And if His Majesty's Ministers did not point it out, why did they not do so? In all this we are considerably in the dark, and I ask the noble Earl whether the House may not be furnished with fuller Parliamentary Papers. I am emboldened to do so because I understand that most important despatches have passed between Sir Edward Grey and the Canadian Minister, and that these despatches have been the subject of comment in the Canadian Parliament. They have been quoted there, and consequently I presume many of them have been already laid on the Table of the Dominion Parliament. I have not so much experience of this House as some noble Lords, but it does seem to me to be strange that in a grave matter of this kind, involving a departure from previous principle, the despatches were laid upon the Table of the Dominion Parliament before being laid upon the Table of the Imperial Parliament. I understand that these despatches have passed between Sir Edward Grey and the Minister for Marine and Fisheries. What was Lord Elgin doing? He was the Colonial Minister. He was at the Colonial Office to protect Colonial interests. I suppose he was concerned in divesting himself of the responsibility of governing the Orange River Colony. What was the noble Earl the Leader of the House doing? He was, no doubt, busy framing Education Bills and conducting the business of your Lordships' House. What was the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack doing? His opinion on international law is paramount. Did he tell the Cabinet that the result of this Convention would be to grant favoured-nation treatment to twenty other countries? Did he explain to the Cabinet the exact effect of this Convention? Indeed, we do not know whether the Cabinet itself discussed this question. Is it possible for Canada, if she wishes to do so, to increase the preference she has already given us, or is she bound by this treaty? We can only assume that this matter was never laid before the Cabinet. If it was laid before the Cabinet they displayed very little concern in it, and so far as they displayed little concern in it they were unmindful of those vast responsibilities committed to their charge.

One cannot help comparing the attitude of His Majesty's Ministers in this grave matter with the policy which the late Government would have pursued. I feel sure that if Mr. Chamberlain had been at the Colonial Office he would have declared that this policy of forcing Canada to make a foreign trade Convention was highly prejudicial to future Imperial trade interests. Why, the whole weight of the Cabinet and of a united party behind it would have been employed to prevent such an unfortunate condition of affairs. It would be presumptuous on my part—more than that, it would be ungenerous—if I were to say that noble Lords opposite were unmindful of the future prosperity of those lands over which they have control—certainly in the case of the noble Earl the present Colonial Minister, for he brings to bear on the administration of that high office all those qualities which we in this House have long learned to recognise and admire. But over and over again Canadian Ministers have expressed their desire to come into closer commercial union with this country, and over and over again those proposals have been dismissed and treated almost with contumely by His Majesty's Ministers. I unhesitatingly assert that Mr. Chamberlain was right when he told this country some years ago that it would be criminal altogether to neglect these proposals. I think that His Majesty's Government are to blame for their failure to recognise the remarkable movement now in progress in the many lands and among the many peoples committed to their charge, and their failure to recognise the line of policy which would deprive that movement of disintegrating force, the tendency of which I have this afternoon ventured to bring before the notice of your Lordships' House.

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying for Papers relating to the recent changes which have been made in the tariffs of the self-governing colonies for promoting their economic development and the extension of their trade relations with the United Kingdom and foreign countries."—(*The Duke of Marlborough.*)

*EARL CROMER: My Lords, the noble Duke, in the interesting speech to which we have just listened, dwelt upon the advantages which will accrue to the Mother Country from the concessions recently made by the Colonies to this country. I have not got the figures with me, and if I had I should not propose to go into them at any length. Let me say at once that, so far as Canada is concerned, there can, I think, be no doubt that of late years there has been an increase of imports from this country of dutiable goods, greater in proportion than the increase of imports from the United States, our principal rival, and this may be, I think, fairly credited to a preferential system.

As regards New Zealand, according to the last tariff the duty on certain foreign articles has been raised, and a duty has been put upon some foreign articles that have been formerly free. The noble Duke, I understand, said that the duty on British goods in some instances had been reduced. I do not in the least challenge the correctness of his statement. I confess it is the first time I have heard of such a reduction. I was under the impression that there had been no reduction of duty on British goods. If any reduction has taken place, it has been extremely slight. In fact, the noble Duke said it was slight. We may cordially welcome the very friendly spirit in which these concessions were made. They may possibly affect favourably the trade of this country. That depends greatly on whether the goods heretofore imported into New Zealand from foreign countries are articles in the supply of which we can compete.

As regards Australia, I cannot think that the changes made in the Australian tariff are likely to do us much good. I believe I am correct in stating that in so far as woollens and mining machinery are concerned, 12 per cent. would about cover all the alleged disadvantages of the Australian manufacturer against his British competitor. Yet the proposed duty is, I understand, 20 per cent. on machinery and 40 per cent. on woollen goods, thus leaving a wide "margin of security" as it is termed. It is true that foreign goods will pay 5 per cent. more, but as by far the greater part of the Australian imports under these heads come from this country, it is clear that the preference accorded will not produce any considerable effect.

I should like, my Lords, with your permission, to diverge for a few minutes from the immediate subject under discussion in order to dwell upon what is going on in Australia with reference to the fiscal reform. The Australian Government is in process of making what, I believe, is called "a scientific tariff." As we are constantly urged to adopt a similar course of action in this country, it will not be altogether devoid of interest to draw the curtain and see the scientists at work in their laboratory. I hold in my hand the draft of the Australian tariff, as it now stands. It is a voluminous document, and covers sixty-seven pages. I do not, of course, propose to weary your Lordships by going into it at length, but I should like to dwell on a few points, as they are highly illustrative of the intricacies and complications which arise in the development of this new science.

I turn to one item—pencils and penholders. They are classed under no less than seven heads, all of which pay different rates of duty. "Pencils of wood, but not including pencils with metal or other clamps or attachments, also pen handles of wood, including—and here remark the extreme scientific accuracy—metal attachments for nibs," are to come in free. And yet not all pencils of wood are to come in free. "Fancy pencils" are to pay a duty of 35 per cent. And yet, again, not all fancy pencils, for "pencils of wood with metal, rubber or other attachments" are to pay 5 per cent. Moreover "pencil cases, pen and pencil sets and penholders" are to pay 30 per cent. After this entry occur the enigmatical letters, "n.e.i." I was at first somewhat puzzled to know what "n.e.i." meant. I thought that it might possibly be some cabalistic sign only comprehensible to those who are initiated into the inner mysteries of the protective system. But I find on inquiry that it means "not elsewhere included." The warning and provision was really very necessary, for on looking over the tariff I find that almost every conceivable article that a human being could want, from his cradle to his grave, is "elsewhere included."

But I have not yet done with the categories. All sets containing pens and pencils and penholders are not to be taxed at 30 per cent. If a schoolmaster wishes to bring in a box containing a set of pens and pencils, it is to come in free. That is a very proper provision no doubt intended to encourage education. But now observe a very subtle distinction. If the same schoolmaster brings in a box containing no pens but only pencils, it is to be charged 35 per cent. In other words, a schoolboy in Australia will be able to write with an untaxed pen, but he must pay very heavily if he wants to use a pencil. Moreover, I wish to point out that every box which is imported by the schoolmaster for use in his school will have to be examined to ascertain whether it contains only pencils or only pens, or both pencils and pens. That seems to me to be rather an elaborate process. There seems, in fact, to be a very deliberate intention on the part of the Commonwealth Parliament to encourage the use of penholders and discourage the use of pencils. For the next item lays down that "penholders other than those of wood, and not being partly or wholly made of gold or silver" are to come in free.

Now, my Lords, let me give another instance—apparel and attire. If it is made of silk or wool, or contains either silk or wool, it is to be charged 45 per cent. If it does not contain any silk or wool it is to be charged 40 per cent. If it is made partly or wholly of textiles, felts, furs, or feathers it is to be charged 30 per cent. Mindful, however, of the important warning, "n.e.i."—not elsewhere included—I looked over the tariff to see whether this was all. And I found that there is another bewildering entry which provides that only 25 per cent. is to be charged on—

> "Piece goods other than of wool or silk suitable for human apparel or to be worn in connection with the human body, having on one or both sides a teased, treated, combed, fluffed, or raised nap or surface in imitation of or resembling flannel in feel or appearance."

That is to say, every man or woman landing in Australia will have to have their luggage examined to see whether any new wearing apparel which they may import is made wholly or partly of wool or silk or textiles, or fur, or felt, or feathers, or, if the material is not made up whether it is teased, treated, combed, fluffed, or has a nap at all resembling flannel. Nor is this all. Numerous exceptions are made. For instance, I observe one which shows that female influence is possibly at work in Australia, for corsets are only to be charged at 15 per cent. duty. Then, my Lords, there is a whole chapter dealing with false hair, which is divided into many categories, such as wigs, fringes, transformations and switches—whatever they may be—besides the important item of hair nets. These are not all to be charged at the same rates. Far from it. There are important differences. I think, my Lords, that I have now said enough to show what an extremely abstruse science this is.

Another incident of this system is that great pressure is brought to bear by various interests upon individual Members of Parliament. A whole bundle of circulars and letters of this descrip- were recently communicated to me. I have selected a few specimens. Many of your Lordships may perhaps think that there is no great difference between salt sacks and salt bags. Any such supposition would be entirely erroneous. A gentleman who is interested in this trade writes—

"Dear Sir,—There has been considerable misconception on the part of Federal Members as to the difference between salt sacks and salt bags."

He then goes on to point out that "a salt bag is made from hessian or calico," whereas "a salt sack is made from jute." Salt bags may, indeed, very properly be charged at the duty of 15 per cent. To this the writer says—

"We do not object, as these bags can be made locally, but the case is very different with a salt bag. That can only be imported from Calcutta."

And then the writer, who is evidently a strong Protectionist, goes on to ask, in a tone of indignant remonstrance—

"Why should salt, gypsum, and manure sacks be singled out for this unreasonable impost?"

After this really noble burst of free trade enthusiasm, he goes on to explain his objections, and the objections are not far to seek. He says—

"My company imports 600 bales of these sacks annually, and the duty on these last year amounted to £570 with the rate at 10 per cent.; if it is raised to 15 per cent. it will come to £900 a year."

Here, my Lords, is another case which has reference to the trade in cycles. It is pointed out that it is most necessary to impose a fixed duty of at least £1 on a frame and forks built up, enamelled, and plated outside Australia. These frames and forks, it says, are to be bought in Birmingham at as low a price as 10s. up to 15s., and the present duty of 25 per cent.—I beg to draw your Lordships' attention to this point—is—

"Totally inadequate to protect the Australian builder, whose frames and forks cost from £1 15s. to £2 to produce. The position is more acute, inasmuch as the English and foreign manufacturers' machinery produces more than enough for the home market."

In other words, the English manufacturer is accused of dumping forks and frames in Australia. I give another case. It seems that under the general tariff glue is subject to a 30 per cent. *ad valorem* duty, whereas gelatine is taxed at the rate of 2d. per lb., which works out to more than 30 per cent. The writer from whom I quote says—

"It is absolutely impossible to differentiate by analysis or otherwise between glue and gelatine. It is also absolutely impossible to fix an arbitrary standard."

And then he goes on to say—

"I have invested a large amount of money in glue, and intend going in for the manufacture of gelatine, but unless a substantial duty is imposed on glue and gelatine I am exposed to the importation of gelatine imported under the heading of glue."

Let me give one further instance. Some glass manufacturers draw attention to the fact that the *ad valorem* duty of 25 per cent. is charged for "globes for light; chimneys for light; fish globes; confectionery glasses; cake glasses; bird seed boxes and cups; fly traps and telegraph glass-ware." They are of opinion that this duty of 25 per cent. must have been imposed without due consideration, for the rate on bottles is 35 per cent. The 25 per cent. charged on other sorts of glass, "though sufficient against British goods, is quite useless against German." They, therefore, earnestly demand that the 25 per cent. duty shall be raised to 35 per cent. I need not, my Lords, dwell on this point any more. All I can say is that I earnestly trust that this scientific, or pseudo-scientific treatment, as I should call it, will never be applied in this country. It may be scientific, but it appears to me to be admirably calculated to produce two effects. One is to encourage corruption amongst the minor officials of the Customs, and the other is to expose Members of Parliament to great temptation that they will sacrifice national to individual interests.

After this digression, for which I trust your Lordships will pardon me, I turn to the main issue raised by the noble Duke. The main issue appears to me to be whether, even taking the most favourable view of the concessions recently made by the Colonies to the Mother Country, they form a sufficient justification for a radical alteration in our fiscal system. I cannot think that they do so. The advantages which are claimed for a system under which preferential treatment should be accorded to the Colonies are two-fold. They are, in the first place, political, and, in the second place, commercial and economic. The political argument is, in my opinion, by far the more important of the two. However much we may differ as to the means, I conceive that all of us—free traders and tariff reformers alike—wish to attain the same object. We all wish to knit the Mother Country and the Colonies together by the closest bonds. Let me say at once that were I convinced that this object would be attained by the adoption of the policy now under discussion, I should approach the subject in a very different spirit. I should be far more inclined to consider earnestly whether some solution could not be found for the very serious economic difficulties which would still remain. But what valid evidence can be adduced that this object will be attained? So far as I can judge, none of much value. Such as there is, is purely hypothetical and speculative. The representatives of many of the Colonies have, indeed, urged the political argument with great skill and ability. That these gentlemen sincerely believe in the political advantages which would accrue from the system which they recommend cannot for one moment be doubted, but I must be permitted to say that the proofs which they adduce are far from convincing. Moreover, in spite of their unquestionable sincerity, they would be more than human if they were not to some extent unconsciously biassed by the enormous and unquestionable benefits which the Colonies would derive if their products were accorded preferential treatment in the markets of the United Kingdom, whilst, at the same time, their own protective system underwent no substantial change, and this is really what they propose.

On the other hand, the views of those who are opposed to preferential treatment are not merely speculative. They are based on the actual experience of the past. The present generation appear to have forgotten that the preferential system was tried over a long series of years and was definitely abandoned in 1845. Anyone who wishes to know the results obtained under that system cannot do better than study the "Report of the Select Committee on Import Duties" presented to the other House in 1840. The economic results were deplorable. The timber merchants of the United Kingdom were precluded from buying good cheap timber from Northern Europe, and were forced to content themselves with inferior wood from Canada. The fraudulent wine merchant found it in his interest to adulterate good foreign wine with the cheap and inferior grape-juice of the Cape. Moreover, on all sides the duties were evaded. Wood from Northern Europe was shipped to Canada and then came to the United Kingdom as Colonial timber. The Brazilian coffee-grower sent his coffee to the Cape; it was then imported into the United Kingdom as Colonial coffee. In fact, as the Committee of 1840 reported, the system gave rise to endless complaints and causes of vexation.

What, however, were the political results obtained under this system? They were the reverse of satisfactory. It can surely not be a mere coincidence that the palmy days of the Little Englander were contemporaneous with the period of preferential treatment. Mr. Cobden, whose name now appears to act on many people in this country like a red flag to a bull, was not the only Little Englander of those days. Even so late as 1852 Lord Beaconsfield, who eventually became one of the main pillars of modern Imperialism, spoke of the Colonies as "millstones round our necks." The utterances of the statesmen of this period abound with passages of a similar nature. Neither can this be any matter for surprise. The interests of every class in this country, and especially of the commercial classes, suffered from their being obliged to buy Colonial produce not altogether suitable to their wants, and from their being unable to procure suitable food and raw material at lower rates in the markets of foreign countries. They naturally showed their resentment by chafing under the Colonial connection. The result was constant friction, and the birth of Little Englandism in an extreme form. I cannot help thinking that there would be a great risk that this is what would happen again. Indeed, in some respects the risk would be greater now than it was sixty years ago, owing to the larger electorate to which an appeal has to be made. We all know that the standard of veracity in the country sinks to its lowest point during periods of electoral excitement. We also know that under whatsoever fiscal system is adopted, the price of bread will fluctuate. I confess that I should look forward with some dread to a general election taking place when every platform in the country would ring with statements to the effect that the dear loaf was due to the sacrifices we were making in order to benefit our countrymen in the Antipodes. Such a contingency, and it would very probably occur, is not, I imagine, calculated to strengthen the bonds which unite the Mother Country and the Colonies.

It is often contended, in answer to these arguments, that the results which ensued prior to 1845 would not ensue now. To a certain limited extent this contention is valid, for no one, I conceive, proposes that so great a preference should be granted to Colonial produce as was granted sixty years ago. The difference is, however, only one of degree. There would certainly be a rise in the price of food and raw material unless the Colonies could send in supplies in sufficient quantities and at similar prices to those now obtained from foreign countries. Now the main contention of the Colonial representatives at the last Conference was that they would be able to furnish these supplies. Sir Joseph Ward, Sir William Lyne, and others, contended that there would be no rise of price, and fully recognised the validity of the British objection to the adoption of any system which would involve a rise. With all deference to these high authorities, I may say that they seem to me to take far too sanguine a view. There are, indeed, vast undeveloped tracts in Canada and Australia. Moreover, the population of those countries is growing. It is perhaps permissible to look forward to some remote time, when possibly the British Empire will supply all its own wants. But I would ask any one who considers this subject calmly, what prospect is there that within any reasonable time these Colonies with their aggregate population of some 11,000,000, will be able to supply the £160,000,000 worth of food and raw material now supplied by foreign countries for the use and consumption of the 44,000,000 inhabitants of these Islands? A long time must elapse before they will be able to do so, and in the meanwhile every one in this country will have to pay more for whatever food and raw material he now gets free of duty from foreign countries. As Mr. Lloyd-George very pertinently remarked at the Conference, a poor man cannot wait for cheap bread.

My Lords, I feel the difficulty of discussing this subject fully without running the risk of using language which may seem to show a want of sympathy for the Colonies. I trust that no words will inadvertently escape my lips which will be capable of any such construction. But, after all, the subject in its commercial and economic aspects is a business matter, and must be discussed on businesslike principles. Mr. Deakin said at the Conference that any arrangement which can be made must be to the mutual advantage of both parties. The advantage to the Colonies in all the proposals which have so far been discussed is evident enough, but we have also to inquire what advantage would be derived by the inhabitants of these Islands. I must confess, that so far I altogether fail to see the advantage. Bear in mind that there is no question of free trade within the Empire. It may readily be admitted that the idea of the 400,000,000 subjects of the King of England exchanging freely their products and manufactures is not merely seductive, it is grand and statesmanlike, but it is admitted on all sides that there is not the smallest prospect of this system being adopted, and by none has the impossibility been admitted more fully than by that eminent statesman, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who, as I gather from his public utterances, is a strong free trader in principle. Moreover, a few months ago, Mr. Deakin was asked in the Australian Commonwealth House of Representatives whether he was prepared to advocate and support a scheme of Imperial free trade. His reply was very explicit—

> "I am not prepared to advocate a scheme of Imperial free trade, and cannot believe that such a policy would be advantageous to the industrial interests of Australia."

More than this, not only is there no prospect whatever of adopting a policy of free trade within the Empire, but it is abundantly clear that the Colonies have not the least intention of abandoning their protective system, or of making any concessions in the nature of preference which would be of real benefit to British trade. I do not, of course, in any degree criticise them for adopting this attitude; they must be the judge of what is best in their own interests. Moreover, I am not concerned to show that the system of free trade can be adopted by all countries under all circumstances. All I maintain is that it is a system adapted to the peculiar conditions which prevail in this country.

When, in the course of the discussions of the Conference, Mr. Lloyd-George said that preference or no preference was the question recently placed before the Australian electorate, Mr. Deakin, at once challenged the statement. He said that the logical order was protection first and preferential trade afterwards. It is perfectly true that the Colonies have already given what appear to be certain advantages to British trade, and they would perhaps be willing to accord others. But on closer examination it is found that the advantages so far accorded are of little real value, and I cannot help thinking that the future will be like the past. Consider what occurred in the case of the British woollen industry. The concessions made to that industry under the Canadian tariff of 1900 were certainly advantageous to British trade. The result was that British woollens were able to compete successfully with the home-made manufactures. The Canadian woollen manufacturers, when once they became alive to this fact, at once protested, with the result that the duty on British woollens was raised.

Mr. Logan, a Liberal Member of Parliament, and a woollen manufacturer of Nova Scotia, expressed himself on this subject in the following very explicit terms:—

> "'Made in Canada' should be the watchword of the people of Canada. Hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House are great Chamberlainites. They are always shouting in favour of Mr. Chamberlain. Yet the very first principle enunciated by Mr. Chamberlain is that this country should lower its tariff on things which are peculiarly British. They know that if to-morrow Mr. Chamberlain were returned to power and he should ask the people of Canada to lower the duty on woollens which are manufactured in England, they would cry their hearts out before they would allow such a lowering to take place. If Mr. Chamberlain's policy means the destruction of Canadian industries for the benefit of British industries, I am opposed to that policy."

Earl Cromer.

I confess, my Lords, that I admire these Canadian protectionists. There is no ambiguity in their language. They let us know exactly what they mean, and what they want. They remind me of Prior's well-known couplet—

> "Euphemia serves to grace my measure.
> But Chloe is my real flame."

Preferential treatment to Great Britain occasionally serves to grace the measure of the Colonists, but their real flame, to whom they adhere with unswerving fidelity, is protection—ultra protection—to native industries.

I invite those who think that an effective preference can be given in Canada to British manufactures to study the proceedings of the Tariff Commission which travelled about Canada to examine into this question about a year ago. Everywhere there was a demand for protection against the British manufacturer. At Three Rivers, on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, protests were made against the Glasgow manufacturers of cast iron water-pipes dumping their manufactures into Canada. In the neighbourhood of St. Hyacinthe, near Quebec, higher duties were demanded on felt and straw hats as a protection against the manufacturers of Stockport, Denton, and Luton. In New Brunswick, the owners of granite quarries, who, I believe, are mostly Scotsmen, asked for a curtailment of the British preference on tombstones, in order to be protected against their fellow-countrymen of Aberdeen, who, it appears, engage in a profitable, if somewhat lugubrious trade in tombstones; and so it was elsewhere.

Let me now quote a voice from the Antipodes. Sir William Lyne said—

> "If I can make the tariff prohibitive, I shall be glad. Importers are parasites on the trade of the Commonwealth."

Moreover, public opinion, both in Canada, New Zealand and elsewhere, speaks with the same voice. The *Toronto Globe* recently said—

> "We may as well admit that British manufacturers want a market, and that Canadian manufacturers will not let them have one in the Dominion."

And the *Evening Post*, a New Zealand paper, said—

> "On our part there is no intention whatever of sacrificing any of our own industries in pursuit of the idea of Colonial Preference."

It would be possible to multiply statements of this description. In fact, so far as we now know, the case remains very much in the same condition as when, twelve years ago, Mr. Chamberlain used the following words—

> "The proposal of the Colonies requires that we should abandon our system in favour of theirs, and this is, in effect, that while the Colonies should be left absolutely free to impose what protective duties they please, both on foreign countries and on British commerce, they should be required to make a small discrimination in favour of British trade, in return for which we are expected to change our whole system and impose duties on food and raw material. Well, I express again my own opinion when I say that there is not the slightest chance that in any reasonable time this country, or the Parliament of this country, should adopt so one-sided an agreement. The foreign trade of this country is so large, and the foreign trade of the Colonies is comparatively so small, that the smallest preference given to us upon that foreign trade by the Colonies would make so trifling a difference that I do not think the working-classes of this country would consent to make a revolutionary change for what they would think to be an infinitesimal gain."

If I am not detaining your Lordships too long, there is yet one further point to which I wish to allude. Nothing is more remarkable than the little attention which has been paid to India in the course of these discussions. Yet the subject is one of vital importance. Out of the £87,000,000 worth of manufactured goods which annually leave this country for British possessions, no less than £41,000,000 go to India. Now the Indian Government, in a despatch addressed to the Secretary of State during the time when my noble friend, Lord Curzon, was Viceroy, stated in very clear terms that India prospered under the present free trade system, and deprecated a change. Sir James Mackay, the representative of the Indian Government at the recent Conference, said—

> "There is no sign that the prosperity of India is insecure, nor is any important trade or industry closely menaced by the restrictive tariffs of foreign countries. It is a fact of no small importance that the purchasing power of India in British markets and her ability to discharge her sterling obligations are wholly dependent on her trade with foreign countries."

These sterling obligations, which I may remind your Lordships are almost exclusively held in this country, amount to the interest on no less than £132,000,000 sterling.

Moreover, Sir James Mackay drew attention to another very important point. Your Lordships will remember the history of the cotton duties in India. They were abolished in 1882, and I may say that, as I was Financial Member of the Governor-General's Council at that time, I well remember, and I think the noble Marquess opposite, who was then Viceroy of India (the Marquess of Ripon) would bear me out in my statement, that in abolishing those duties, the Government was not only influenced by the advantages which would accrue to India from the adoption of a free trade system, but also by the very great desirability of putting a stop to an acrimonious discussion in which British and Indian interests clashed or appeared to clash. Subsequently, as your Lordships are no doubt aware, in view of the fall of the rupee and the high military expenditure which was incurred, the duties were re-imposed, but their protective character was nullified by the imposition of an excise duty on Indian manufactures equivalent to the customs duty on the imported articles. When once a preferential or protective system is adopted in this country I conceive it certain that an outcry will be raised in India that the excise duty should be abolished, and under the supposed circumstances I do not see how we can contend that a system which we have adopted ourselves may not also be adopted with advantage to India. Leaving aside the purely fiscal and economic arguments involved in the discussion of this question, I ask whether it is politically wise, more especially in the present state of India, to raise again a discussion of this nature? To me it would certainly appear to be in the highest degree imprudent.

My Lords, it is not difficult to anticipate the general nature of the answer which will be made by the Government to the proposals of the noble Duke. Neither should I have intervened in this debate had it not been that voices—perhaps somewhat beery voices—from Peckham and elsewhere have recently warned us that conceivably before long the question which we have been discussing will become, to a greater extent, within the arena of practical politics than is at present the case. Moreover—and here I will make a confession which may, perhaps, be received with some satisfaction by noble Lords behind me—I trust I may turn out to be a false prophet, but I hardly think that the Budget recently introduced into the other House is of a nature to postpone the advent of the time of which I speak. An eminent French philosopher once said that in order to succeed in life a man should act as if he were going to live for ever. The Prime Minister appears, I cannot but think, to be acting financially as if he thought that a Government in sympathy with free trade would last for ever, and this would appear to be rather a sanguine forecast.

In a debate which recently took place in another place on the subject of tariff reform, Mr. Balfour made a speech which, to a certain limited extent, I read with pleasure. He based the necessity of a fiscal change not on the protectionist arguments which are so frequently used, but on the necessity of increasing the revenue, a principle to which free traders do not object, although they look with some anxiety as to the manner in which the principle is applied. But he added that, in reforming the fiscal system, he hoped an opportunity would arise of making arrangements with the Colonies which would be a great source of strength to the Empire. I submit, with all deference to Mr. Balfour's high authority, that the accrual of any greater strength by the adoption of a preferential system is more than questionable. Apart from the very great economic objections to preferential treatment, I deprecate any attempt to commercialise patriotism, or to assess the loyalty of the Colonies in the schedule of a Tariff Act. We are now united by community of race, by community of language, by the traditions of the past, and by what is, perhaps, the mightiest tie of all—a common Sovereign. I say that these bonds of union suffice. Let us leave well alone. Mr. Chamberlain, in a speech which was quoted by the late Prime Minister at the first sitting of the Colonial Conference, warned us against forging any link with the Colonies which would be galling in its incidence. I cannot but think that preferential treatment would soon prove galling to one or other side, and very probably to both.

VISCOUNT RIDLEY: My Lords, the noble Earl on the Cross Benches (Lord Cromer) speaks on matters of Imperial import with an authority which is very great in the councils of this Empire, and if I venture, on certain points, to criticise the observations he has just addressed to your Lordships, I hope he will understand that I do so with the greatest respect for his authority. The noble Earl stated that he desired, in any observations he had to make with reference to the Colonial question, to say nothing that could be in any way disrespectful to the Colonies, but I am not quite sure that his excursion into the Australian tariff was altogether in consonance with the desire. I am not quite certain that his views upon the Australian tariff would be altogether agreed to by those in Australia who framed that tariff, but of this I am certain—that if the noble Earl would pay the same attention to the tariffs of the United States and of Germany he would find even more minute classification, which has been eminently successful in promoting the trade of those countries.

The noble Earl made no allusion to the fact that, under the Australian tariff, a very large proportion of the goods exported from this country to Australia are admitted free—something, I think, like one-third. Therefore, what does not apear in the Australian tariff is a matter of considerable importance. Not only is it worth while in this connection to examine the tariffs of scientific countries, but if he examined the tariff even of an unscientific country—the Customs tariff of the United Kingdom—the noble Earl would find there equal material for laughter and criticism. The noble Earl is so full of the difficulties and dangers of making a tariff that in the course of his speech he utterly failed to recognise the difficulties and dangers into which we are drifting at the present moment, and by calling attention to which the noble Duke has performed a public service.

Let me dwell for a moment on the previous history of this question. The noble Earl made a great point of the fact that preferences had existed and been abolished, but I think he forgot to mention that they were abolished under totally different conditions. The preferences were forced upon the Colonies by the Mother Country, not coming as part of a mutual bargain, as they do in this case; yet when they were abolished they were abolished in the teeth of violent protests from the Colonies from whom that preference was taken. Moreover, they were not abolished from any inherent objection to them, for Mr. Gladstone himself stated that the preferences were of considerable value. He said—

> "In 1843 I pleaded strongly for the admission of all the Colonies to the privilege (of preference) granted to Canada."

They were abolished, as a matter of fact, in order to make our duties symmetrical, and for a long period they have remained abolished.

Your Lordships are familiar with the steps by which this question has again come before the country. There was the denunciation of the Belgian and German treaties. Then there was the repeated demand of the Colonies that preference should be given, the actual giving of preference by the Colonies themselves, and then the Colonial Conference of last year. It is important to observe that on that occasion the Government really stood upon two legs. The Government, first of all, said, through the mouth of one of their spokesmen, that they were most sympathetic with the Colonies and most anxious to meet them in every possible way, but that they had to consider the poor people of their own country and could not interfere with the tariff for fear of making their burden heavier. The Colonial Ministers then said; "We do not ask you to do anything that would increase the burden upon the poor people of whom you speak. Can you not give us a preference upon articles on which you already have a duty, such as sugar, tobacco, and wine?" The Government then took the line that they were unable to consider the policy of treating the Colonies separately from other countries.

What I feel it is important for this House to know is what the Government's policy is going to be as regards the development of trade with the Colonies. They have admitted at the Colonial Conference that the preferences were of value; they have admitted, through the mouth of many of their spokesmen, that they are proud of our Empire and anxious to promote its well-being; and they ended the Conference with various suggestions as regards an all-red route and other schemes for closer ties with the Colonies, of which we have heard nothing since. The policy of mere sympathy may be a very valuable one; the attitude of the Government may be perfectly correct; but are they aware of the result of their policy? And if they are aware of it, why do they not tell the country? The result is an entirely new departure in the treaty-making powers of the Empire and the taking away of important trade privileges from large sections of the people of this country. The noble Duke referred in his speech to various communications between the Foreign Office and the Canadian Minister for Marine and Fisheries. Two despatches on this subject were quoted by the Canadian Minister in the Dominion House of Commons on 3rd March this year. One was a despatch written by the noble Marquess, Lord Ripon, in June, 1895, which laid down the basis of negotiations between the Colonies and other countries. It stated that—

> "The negotiations then being between Her Majesty and the Sovereign of the foreign State must be conducted by Her Majesty's representative at the Court of the foreign Power, who would keep Her Majesty's Government informed of the progress of the discussion and seek instructions from them as necessity arose."

The other despatch is from the British Government to the Canadian Minister, dated 4th July, 1907. It lays down a totally different principle, and asserts that—

> "The selection of the negotiator is principally a matter of convenience, and in the

present circumstances it will obviously be more practical that the negotiations should be left to Sir Wilfrid Laurier and to the Canadian Minister of Finance, or the Canadian Ministers, who will doubtless keep you informed of their progress."

In dealing with matters of treaty-making I should desire to treat them with the greatest circumspection, and not say anything which could embarrass the relations of His Majesty's Government with the Colonies or any foreign Power. I only desire to say that the wording of this despatch is indicative of a totally different policy. It indicates that certain large powers are being granted to Canadian Ministers, as regards their dealings with foreign countries, which have not hitherto been enjoyed by them. I do not say whether this is right or wrong, but it seems to me to mark a great revolution in the policy of the Empire, a revolution effected silently, without the knowledge of the bulk of the people of this country, and without any Papers being presented to the British Parliament on the subject.

I venture to hope that the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies may be able to give some statement as to the views of the Government upon it, and also lay whatever Papers it may be possible for him to present to Parliament. It is important more from what it may mean in the future than from what it means in this particular instance. If it is possible for the Governments of His Majesty's Dominions beyond the seas to make these commercial treaties with foreign nations, involving concessions which are in the end prejudicial to British trade, it is highly important that those negotiations should be conducted with the greatest care, and that the Ministers concerned should be kept fully informed as to the exact effect they will have on the industries concerned. For what has been the effect of this convention between Canada and France? The noble Duke has dealt fully with the matter. He has pointed out that the effect has been to reduce considerably the value of the British preference. The Minister for Customs in Canada, speaking in the Canadian House of Commons, said—

> "My own judgment is that, taken in the gross, the effect of the French treaty will be to reduce the British preference from 33⅓ per cent. to 23⅓ per cent,"

Viscount Ridley.

a reduction of 10 per cent.; and upon many manufactures the difference between the two tariffs is only 2½ per cent. in favour of Great Britain. The tariff on embroidery and lace under the preferential tariff is 25 per cent.; under the French treaty tariff it is 27 per cent. The tariff upon ribbons under the preferential tariff is 22½ per cent.; under the French treaty tariff it is 25 per cent. On silk manufactures it is 30 per cent. under the preferential tariff, as against 33 per cent. under the French treaty tariff. The trade in all these lines of goods, which is of considerable importance to this country, and in which we have serious competition, has practically been annihilated by this treaty made with France.

So far as it is possible to judge from the general tendency, the Colonies are anxious, and properly anxious, to develop trade with the Mother Country, but the Canadian treaty shows that if we are not prepared to meet them with concession for concession, they may be driven, in their desire to increase their trade, to concessions that will minimise and may eventually destroy the preference which they give to us, and the value of which is admitted to the full by His Majesty's Government. Not only is it the fact that by this treaty the value of the preference is largely reduced. There is much more. As the noble Duke has pointed out, immediately and at once, under the operations of the most-favoured-nation clause, twenty other countries are *ipso facto* admitted to every benefit which France enjoys by means of the treaty. Having regard to the complications that may arise from the most-favoured-nation treaties and the development of the policy of Colonial treaty-making, we may, eventually, lose all the advantage of preference we have enjoyed. This, so far as I can judge, is simply because His Majesty's Government banged, barred, and bolted the door in the faces of the Colonial Premiers at the Colonial Conference. I think it is important that when His Majesty's Government take a deliberate step of that kind, they should present the country with the fullest information as to the results. We have great competition with Switzerland in hosiery and lace, with Austria in the export of ready-made clothing, and with Japan and other countries in the manufacture of silk, and in each of these industries the English manufacturer has come to depend on a valuable preference against his competitors in the markets of Canada. That preference has now been reduced practically to a minimum. Is it wonderful if one is disposed to feel that His Majesty's Ministers, when they sympathise with the Colonies in their aspirations, are only doing lip service to the idea, especially when we find that in no single instance do they attempt to carry out those commercial relations with the Colonies which they admit to be of advantage to this country?

All over the world nations are tumbling over each other in the endeavour to obtain a share in the preference we have up to this time derived in Canadian trade. Great forces are at work in the British Empire which will not be controlled. There is a growing feeling of nationality in the Colonies, a desire to be treated as nations in the councils of the world; on the other hand, with the necessity for large imports, there is a desire to have them from the Mother Country. Those two forces are at work within the British Empire, and His Majesty's Government allow matters to drift because they will not take the only action which will meet the position. It is difficult to speak upon this question without introducing party feeling into it, but I most sincerely desire not to do so. This is a matter of too great importance. His Majesty's Government may be right or they may be wrong in the line they are taking, but whatever the results of their refusal of preference to the Colonies may be, the constitutional result in the British Empire may be fraught with untold consequences. I venture to hope that the noble Earl will be able to give some information as to the views of His Majesty's Government of what has happened in the affairs to which the noble Duke has called attention.

*VISCOUNT WOLVERHAMPTON: My Lords, I have been struck, in the course of this debate, with the two powerful speeches which have been made by the noble Duke who initiated this discussion and by the noble Viscount who has just supported his views. They confined their remarks to two of the great issues involved. First, the noble Duke dealt entirely with the question of Colonial preference; the noble Viscount dealt with a constitutional question outside that of preference altogether, and proceeded to censure the Government in the conduct of their diplomatic relations. It fell to my lot a few years ago to take part in the settlement of the financial relations between this country and India, and I think that one of the most important questions arising in considering inter-colonial relations and alteration of relations between this country and Colonial dominions beyond the seas is the effect upon the financial position of India.

Perhaps the House will allow me to recall what is the position of India in this matter, and state how cautiously both branches of the Legislature ought to proceed in dealing with this question. It is impossible to alter the policy of this country with reference to its Colonies and foreign relations and exclude India altogether from consideration. The noble Duke spoke of the large amount of trade that we do with India. India buys from the United Kingdom and Colonies 50¼ millions of the 68¾ millions which she imports. The exports from India are a much more important question. The entire exports of India amount to over £106,000,000, of which £39,000,000 go to this country and its Colonies, the Colonial trade being very small. Any attempt at preferential, or discriminatory, or retaliatory duties must have an important bearing on Indian trade, and the greatest caution is necessary in the consideration of the matter.

The position of India is based on free trade. It is based upon free trade practically by the direction and control of the Parliament of this country. Lord Cromer alluded to the happy time when he was enabled to advise the Viceroy and the Viceroy's Council to dispense with the cotton duties and the other duties in 1882; but a great crisis afterwards arose in Indian finance, and ten years later the present system of Indian relationship with finance was definitely settled. The Indian tariff is a revenue tariff and not in any way a protective tariff. It is based on free trade. There is a general duty of 5 per cent., with the exception of coal and railway material. On cotton goods there is a duty of 3½ per cent., with a corresponding excise duty upon the manufactures of India. In the main, India depends upon its agriculture and the cheap production of food and of other commodities chiefly sold to foreign nations. India is a debtor country. Therefore its exports must always be larger than its imports. The overwhelming proportion of the Indian export trade is not with the United Kingdom. We sell to India about two-thirds of what it imports; and we take about one-fourth of what it exports. Therefore, any diminution of the trade of India with her foreign customers would lessen her power of buying English products and of meeting her obligations to her English creditors. The capital upon which India has constructed her railways and other great works has been in the main found by Englishmen. I think the noble Earl on the cross benches put the amount of English capital in India at £130,000,000.

Lord CROMER: One hundred and thirty-two millions, exclusive of the Rupee Loans.

***Viscount WOLVERHAMPTON**: I think our claim upon India is even larger than that. As I have said, three-quarters of the export trade of India is not with us but with foreign nations; and therefore any action which would affect that foreign trade would be attended with risk to the financial relations between this country and India. I should like to call the attention of the House to the procedure which was initiated by Lord George Hamilton in dealing with this question. When the question of tariff reform was first raised by Mr. Chamberlain, Lord George Hamilton, then Secretary of State for India, sent a despatch to the Government of India asking for their views as to how the proposed preferential, discriminatory, or retaliatory duties would affect Indian trade and finance, and what was the opinion of the Council of the Government of India upon it. That called forth from Lord Curzon and his colleagues a despatch of singular

ability, and one worthy of Lord Curzon's name and of his experience and pre-eminent administrative ability. I should like to read a word or two from that despatch. It says—

> "In this connection we desire to emphasise with all the weight possible, the argument elaborated in the paragraph of the Financial Minister. The factor there stated is peculiar to India and differentiates her case trom that of any other member of the Empire. India is a debtor country."

The Report then proceeded—

> "Her net obligations are approximately 16 millions sterling per annum. The major part of this great charge is payable in a currency different from that in which her revenues are collected. The only means consistent with national solvency of discharging this obligation lies in the preservation of an equivalent excess of exports over imports—in other words, in maintaining a sufficiently favourable balance of trade. It is therefore a vital object with us to stimulate our exports by every means in our power, to seek new markets and develop old ones, and to remove all obstacles which stand in the way of growing external demand. If then, notwithstanding the safeguards which we possess, we should unhappily be drawn into tariff wars with powerful countries, it cannot be doubted that, whichever way the ultimate victory might incline, our export trade would for the time being be injuriously affected. Such a result would be fraught with the gravest consequences. By ten years of effort, sacrifice, and perseverance we have slowly built up a fair measure of public confidence in the stability of our finance. Exchange has been steadied, our credit is good and improving, our rupee securities are rising in relative value in the London market, and we have created the nucleus of a reserve of gold. But if by a change of fiscal policy the balance of trade in our favour should dwindle or disappear, the whole work of ten years would be sacrificed; and the setback to our trade, our revenues, and our credit would immensely outweigh any benefits that we might reasonably expect from the most unconditional surrender of our opponents in the war of tariffs. We cannot sufficiently impress this danger on your attention. Even if the chances of success were greater than we conceive them to be, we hold that the certain cost of the struggle and the severe penalties of defeat would be too heavy a price to pay."

In another part of the Report the Government of India declare—

> "If the United Kingdom should eventually resolve to adopt a policy of preferential tariffs or of retaliation, it is conceivable that the device of attacking her through her chief dependency might receive further development at the hands of foreign countries. In that event, if India adheres to her former principle of refusing to differentiate between the imports of different countries, she may suffer by being

made the battlefield of conflicting interests with which she has no direct concern."

That is the question which I desire to place before your Lordships—the supreme interest that India has, as a great debtor country, in the maintenance of free trade, and the fact that any impairing of her financial power would re-act upon a large section of the inhabitants of this country and also upon her commercial relationships elsewhere.

After all, this question of Colonial preference, if you reduce it to pounds, shillings, and pence, is a very small matter. What can it amount to so long as the Colonies are firmly determined not to admit British manufactures in competition with their own? I would also point out the great danger, in the present state of public opinion in India, of any approach to tampering with its financial position, which could be twisted, and possibly would be twisted, into an attack upon the British Government in reference to the Government of India. This question of the interests of India demands the most careful consideration of this country before we sanction in any way, directly or indirectly, any interference with our sound and safe fiscal policy.

*VISCOUNT MILNER: My Lords, after the weighty and eloquent speeches on the grave matter which is the subject of this debate from the noble Earl who sits in front of me and the noble Viscount who has just addresesd the House, my courage might well fail me in attempting the task of replying if it were not that this is a matter to which, for various reasons, I have been forced to give years of consideration. Every year that passes confirms me more strongly in views the very opposite of those in which I have been brought up, and the very opposite of the views which have been so eloquently put before the House by the noble Lords to whom I have referred. I am sure that this House, which has always tolerated the unaffected expression of strong convictions, will sympathise with me in the very serious task which now lies before me. It is difficult to select from the arguments which have been addressed to your Lordships against the doctrines advocated by the noble Duke those which most require reply. I cannot possibly attempt to deal with them all. But I will seek to direct your attention for a short time to one or two points which seem to me to be of the greatest importance.

First of all, may I say a word on the subject of India? I think we are all agreed that in the consideration of this question the effect of any changes in our commercial policy upon India must be regarded as of the very highest importance. I am glad that emphasis has been laid upon this branch of the subject to-night, because, if I may criticise my own side, I should like to say that in the arguments of the advocates of preference insufficient attention has hitherto been given to the Indian part of the case. But I for one am unable to follow the argument that we are debarred from adopting a policy which we believe would be of great commercial benefit to the other portions of the Empire because of its reflex action upon India. We have had quoted to us the despatch from the Viceroy's Council in India under Lord Curzon, giving not, indeed, a negative to the proposal of preferential trade within the Empire, but certainly expressing grave misgivings as to the effect which preferential trade might have upon India.

I did not come here prepared for this particular point, but my memory must entirely fail me if I am mistaken in thinking that the gentleman who was at that time the Financial Member of Council in India—Sir Edward Law—took a different view upon this matter, and, indeed, is an advocate of preferential trade in the interest of India herself. Whatever may be the opinions which he held at that time, there is no doubt that that gentleman, the financial adviser to the Government of India—and a man who has been financial adviser to the Government of India certainly counts for something in a question of this kind—is at this day a strong advocate of preferential trade in the interests of India, inasmuch as he has just written the preface to a book on this subject, which discusses the whole question with remarkable freshness and ability, and which is from first to last one of the strongest pamphlets published in favour of preferential trade within the Empire. I mean "India and the Empire" by Mr. Webb.

VISCOUNT WOLVERHAMPTON: Sir Edward Law presented a separate Minute, and Lord Curzon in the course of his despatch said he could not do better than emphasise these remarks of Sir Edward Law.

*VISCOUNT MILNER: I have not had an opportunity of referring to Sir Edward Law's Minute, but the fact remains that Sir Edward Law must now be accounted, in view of his latest declarations on the subject, an advocate of the policy which the noble Lord has just criticised. So far I have failed to understand what is the injury which it is feared the introduction of preferential trade within the Empire is going to do to India. It has been pointed out to us that the export trade of India is of vast importance to her. Obviously, and it is of vast importance to us. But so far as her export trade to this country is concerned, that certainly is not going to be injured by an arrangement which will give her an advantage in our market over her foreign competitors. Are her exports to foreign countries to be injured? Why should they be? Do foreign countries at present buy of India for love of India? On the contrary, they impose heavy duties—in many cases exceedingly heavy duties—with the object of keeping Indian manufactures out of their markets. They only buy freely from India the things which they cannot dispense with—the raw materials which are absolutely essential to them for their own industries. And they will continue to buy them—they must continue to buy them—whatever policy India adopts.

The present system and position, under which foreign countries do all they can to keep out Indian manufactures—and we are powerless to do anything to assist India—is a most extraordinary one. Take the exports of jute. Foreign countries derive great quantities of unmanufactured jute from India, and they will continue to buy as much as ever they can get, whatever system of tariff may be adopted in this country, the Colonies, and India, because they need it for their factories which compete with us. They encourage the importation of raw jute from India, but they put heavy and prohibitive taxes upon the import of the manufactured article. What is the result? Indian jute is taken to foreign countries to be made up into the manufactured article, and that manufactured article is then imported into Great Britain to compete with our own manufactures, and is competing with them to our detriment.

Is there not something most unnatural in an arrangement and system, under which foreign countries while excluding the manufactures of India buy from India the raw material of those manufactures, manufacture it themselves, and then import it into England to compete with our own manufactures of the same kind. Thus the profit of converting the raw material grown in one part of the Empire into finished goods to be consumed in another part is taken away from the workers of the Empire by the foreigner

My contention is that there are obvious respects in which India will benefit from the system of preferential trade, within the Empire, and that the fear that she will be damaged depends entirely upon the assumption that foreign Governments will try to strike at us through India—to punish us for adopting a principle in our own tariff legislation which they all adopt themselves. But I do not believe in the least in this bugbear that foreign nations are going to turn round and punish us for doing what they all do. No doubt they are very glad of a system under which they tax our imports as much as they please, and we never retaliate. But on what conceivable principle, either of equity or respect for the public opinion of the world, or for their own interest, are they going to adopt this policy of punishing us? And if they do, how are they going to carry it out? They already tax our goods in every case in which they do not think they would be injuring themselves by doing so. It seems to me that we are excessively timorous if we think that as a nation, as an Empire, we are not in a position to take a course which is freely taken by our own Colonies and by almost every foreign country. I deprecate the assumption that foreign countries are so unreasonable that they are going to depart from the policy they have always hitherto pursued of using their tariffs for their own interests, and that they are going to punish themselves and cut their own throats in order to penalise us for doing what they all do.

Passing from India to the more general question of the effect of mutual advantages in respect of tariffs upon the trade of different parts of the Empire, I must protest most strongly against the assumption which has been made by the noble Viscount who has just addressed us that because the Colonies are protectionist, and likely to remain protectionist, therefore the advantages we should derive from preference in their markets are never likely to be very considerable. That seems to me to be the root fallacy of all those who take a strong line opposed to preferential tariffs. Let me say at once that in my view of preferential trade I am unaffected by the extent to which our Colonies may adopt protection. I am unaffected by the hope or fear that a preferential system may lead to the general adoption of free trade throughout the Empire. I am somewhat doubtful of the advantages of such a general system of free trade, but we need not discuss that now. My whole case rests upon this contention, that, however much the Colonies protect their own manufactures—and, perhaps, even in consequence of that protection of their own manufactures—they are bound to be great importers, great buyers, and the difficulty which meets us on all sides of getting sufficient markets for our own exports makes it a matter of immense importance to us that we should be the first to supply, as far as we can supply, that vast quantity of imported goods, which the Colonies, however much they protect, are going to require.

My contention is that, however much these great and growing countries may protect industries in which they are specially interested, they will still be great buyers from the outside world, and the question is whether or not we are to be the principal sellers. They all wish us to be. They are all anxious to buy from us. I admit that the Colonies are keen about protecting their own industries, and I rather sympathise with them; but let them protect as much as they please, they are still going to be great importers. Canada, under a free trade or at any rate a less protective system, had seventy or ninety million dollars worth of imports, to-day she has from 200 to 300 million dollars. Under a protective system the imports of the Colonies are growing just as the imports of protected Germany are growing. The idea that the adoption of protection by a country is bound to reduce its import trade is exploded by the facts all round us.

Highly protected countries are continually increasing their foreign trade. Granted that the Colonies are all protectionist, they remain great markets, and our point is that in those markets we now have an advantage which we are in danger of losing. It consists in the possession of a preference which we calculate will give us the lion's share in the purchases of those countries which are already of such great importance and which have such immense futures. As long as the Colonies buy from us rather than from the foreigner the vast mass of the articles which they require, our point is gained. The danger which we run now is that we may no longer get the lion's share of these enormous purchases of the Colonies; that if we do nothing on our side to encourage preferential trade throughout the Empire the great advantage which we now enjoy, and which will be so much greater as time goes on and the trade of the Colonies develops, will gradually disappear. That is the danger with which we are confronted, the danger of losing the present great advantage, and the much greater future advantage, of being the principal suppliers of the great markets of the Colonies. The Colonies have taken the lead in this matter of introducing the system of preferential trade. They have done so from two motives. In the first place, there is the motive, freely and eloquently admitted by the late President of the Board of Trade, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he said they had acted in this matter "in a spirit of comradeship and even of affection." That is perfectly true. Their spirit of comradeship and affection may not go so far as the sacrifice of their own interests. Why should we wish it? It is sufficient for us that, while safeguarding their own interests, they are anxious to give us the advantage in their own markets as against the foreigner, not as against their own producers. They will protect themselves first, but they are anxious that such goods as in their own interests they require to buy shall as far as possible be bought from other parts of the Empire rather than from foreign countries. I have said they are influenced by considerations of kinship and affection. They are also influenced, no doubt, by the hope that in taking this line they will hold out sufficient inducements to the Mother Country to follow in the same course.

It is perfectly evident, it has been emphasised by Colonial statesman after Colonial statesman, that the preference which they at present give, which cannot be described as inconsiderable, is less than the preference which they would be prepared to give if they were to meet with any corresponding return on the part of the Mother Country. Therefore we must not estimate the value of the preference merely by the position as it is, but by the position as it might be. But do not let any of us under-estimate the importance of the preference as it is. It is a preference which in the case of Canada converted a ten years fall in British trade from £7,000,000 to £5,000,000 into a ten years rise from £5,000,000 to £13,000,000. Surely that is not a small matter. It is a preference which in four years has increased our imports into New Zealand by £3,000,000, by 40 per cent., while at the same time the corresponding imports from foreign countries have hardly increased at all.

These New Zealand figures are of the greatest possible moment. Here is this relatively immense increase of £3,000,000 in the importation of British goods into a comparatively small country within four or five years as compared with hardly any increase in the importation of foreign goods. What had been the case during previous years? During the previous eight or ten years, although the imports into New Zealand generally were increasing, the foreign imports increased over 100 per cent., while the increase of our imports was less than 50 per cent. Preference has had the effect of entirely altering the proportionate increase of foreign imports and British imports into the growing market of New Zealand. The noble Earl who sits in front of me said he was not aware that New Zealand had made any reduction in the duties on British goods. If so, it strengthens my argument. The more protectionist New Zealand is the more do the figures of New Zealand trade illustrate my main point, the importance of our having the lion's share in the purchases of the Colonies, even though they are protectionist. The New Zealand figures entirely dispose of the argument that preference in the market of a protectionist country is of no value.

Viscount Milner.

What fills me with alarm is the indubitable fact that without reciprocity we cannot permanently enjoy these advantages. Let there be no question about this. You may say, If the Colonies give us this preference from motives of affection, why should they withdraw it because we do not respond? I am perfectly certain they do not wish to withdraw it, but they may be unable to help themselves. I have pointed out that the Colonies are great importers for the purpose of their own development; they are great buyers, and, like all other buyers, they have to look after markets in which they can sell in order to pay for the great quantity of goods which they require to buy. They are in a world in which, rightly or wrongly, if any nation wishes to have a position of vantage in the markets of others the only way in which it can get it is by a system of mutual concession. The market in which the Colonies are most desirous to have a position of vantage is the great British market. But if they cannot get a position of vantage there they must look for it elsewhere; and in looking for it elsewhere they are confronted by the fact that, in order to obtain a position of vantage in foreign markets, they are obliged to make concessions upon their tariffs which reduces the value of the preference which they have given to the Mother Country.

What has just happened between Canada and France has been most clearly explained by the noble duke. There is, however, one further point about it to which I cannot help calling attention. Canada did not start with the desire to give up as much of the British preference as she was ultimately forced to give up. The offer with which Canada went to France was that France should take Canada's intermediate tariff, which would have given France a considerable advantage as compared with other foreign nations importing into Canada while still leaving a substantial preference to Great Britain. But in the course of the negotiations Canada was forced from that position, and she was driven to make a large number of special rates, which reduced almost to vanishing point the distance between the tariff given to France and the tariff enjoyed by Great Britain on many articles. There you have the process actually going on under your eyes—a Colony anxious to keep a prerogative position in her markets for the Mother Country and yet driven from that position by the necessity of bargaining to secure her own requirements as an exporter. There can be no doubt whatever of the desire of the Colonies, first and foremost, to have a position of vantage in the British market. If it is to be denied them they must try and get it somewhere, and in the process of fighting for it they will be obliged to throw over first one item and then another in their tariffs which are at present favourable to Great Britain. That process has already begun.

Canada has been driven from her original position and has been obliged not only to give France much more than she wished to give, having regard to her desire to maintain the benefit which she had accorded to this country, but also, by the operation of the most-favoured-nation clause, to extend the concessions made to France to a number of other countries. One or two more treaties like the treaty between France and Canada will have the effect of destroying our preferential advantages in the Canadian market altogether. It will be said, perhaps, on behalf of the Government, "We admit all this. Perhaps we do not go as far as you do. We do not estimate as highly as you do the value of Colonial preference. But we allow that it has a certain value. But what are we to do? How do you expect us to help in this matter?"

My Lords, before I answer that, let me point out once more all that is involved in this issue. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer has put in language of much greater eloquence than I can command the importance of developing the trade of the Empire by mutual concessions. He said—

> "In Great Britain we have the greatest produce market in the world. We are the greatest purchasers of produce raised and manufactured outside our boundaries. A very large proportion of this produce can very well be raised in the Colonies, and any reasonable and workable plan that would tend to increase the proportion of that produce that is bought by us from the Colonies and by the Colonies from us, and from each other, must necessarily increase the resources of the Empire as a whole. A considerable part of the surplus population of the United Kingdom which now goes to foreign lands in search of a livelihood might then find it to its profit to pitch its tent somewhere under the flag, and the Empire would gain in riches, material, and men. We agree with our colonial comrades that all this is worth concerted effort, even if that effort at the outset costs us something. The federation of free commonwealths is worth making some sacrifice for. One never knows when its strength may be essential to the great cause of human freedom, and that is priceless."

"Concerted effort"—"worth making some sacrifice for, even if it cost us something!" I will not ask what sacrifice are we making, because my firm conviction is that no sacrifice is required. But effort is required. What effort of any sort or kind has been made to preserve those great objects which are described in the passage which I have read, and which we see slipping from our grasp?

I suppose we shall be told that the only effort worth making, the only effort which could be productive of any great result, would be a tax upon food imported from foreign countries, from which tax food coming from the Colonies would be wholly or partially exempt. Now, I might take the point that a great deal can be done without imposing any fresh tax at all. I might point out that there was no answer given to the request addressed by the Colonial statesmen at the Conference to our Government to give Colonial producers some advantage in respect of the articles which we at present tax. But I prefer to face the matter squarely and to say that from my point of view the imposition of a 2s. a quarter duty on corn and corresponding low duties on other articles of food imported from foreign countries would be an extraordinarily low price to pay for a position of permanent vantage for British merchants and British workmen in supplying the needs of the other portions of the Empire, with all the enormous industrial future which in store for them.

If it is contended that such a duty would fall heavily on any particular class of the population, it is perfectly easy to meet that difficulty by the readjustment of our own existing taxes. As a nation we should lose nothing whatever by the imposition of such a tax. We should have so much more revenue, which we could use either for any purposes for which we required it, or for making equivalent reductions in other taxes. But as a nation we should gain the immense advantage of the enhanced trade which would ensue.

So much for what I may call the material, the economic point, whether we can afford to introduce taxes in this country which would enable us to give a preference to the Colonies and so retain those advantages which are slipping from us. But there is another point dwelt on with great force by the noble Earl which I may call the political and moral point. It is said that if we adopt a system of preferential trade throughout the Empire it will lead to perpetual disputes and ill-feeling, and that it will tend to separate us rather than to bind us together. I believe it is the universal experience of mankind that the profitable exchange of goods between one country and another is one of the influences most tending to amity between those countries. All history bears it out. The system we advocate is a sytsem which has for its principal object the increase of a mutually profitable interchange of goods between this country and the other dominions of the Crown. Why should the influence which increase of trade has always exercised be reversed in this particular instance? Will not the very fact of our having an increased interest in the trade of the Colonies and their having an increased interest in ours of itself tend to closer relationships, rather than to the reverse?

But, it may be said, we shall fight about the terms. No, we shall not fight about the terms, if we grasp the true principle of preference which I have, however feebly, tried to explain. There might be serious quarrels arising over a universal free-trade system within the Empire. If the nascent industries of any portion of the Empire were to find themselves crushed by dumping from other parts which were industrially more advanced, I can quite understand that that would lead to ill-feeling and to a disposition to rebel against the general system. But as long as every part of the Empire is allowed to exercise the greatest freedom in the formation of its tariff, in its own interest, and for the development of its own trade, how can it possibly lead to ill-feeling that in that trade which is left open for importation it should be dealing rather with other portions of the Empire than with foreign countries? Does that leave room for any cause of quarrel whatsoever? I fail entirely to understand how it can be contended that it would do so.

There is no doubt a possibility that pressure may be put from time to time upon Colonial Governments to protect their traders even more than they do at present against English manufactures. It would be regrettable if that were to take place. But even if that pressure was yielded to, it would not necessarily destroy the system of preference; indeed, it would not necessarily even impair it, because they can do what Australia has done, and what I think has been very unreasonably criticised. If they want to protect their own goods more against English competition they can raise their duties. It would be very unfortunate, but as long as, whatever duties they impose, they still differentiate between us and the foreigner, we shall still retain the advantage on which I have so strongly insisted—the advantage of a preferential position in what must be great markets, whatever the degree of protection.

Do not let us forget one other point, which has not been referred to at all in this discussion, namely, that the interest which we have in this matter is not only the development of our own trade, it is also the development of the trade of the Colonies. If we are cosmopolitans it does not matter whether we deal more with foreign countries or with our own Colonies. But if the Empire is to be regarded in any sense as a body politic, then surely next to the development of our own trade in this country it is of importance to us to develop the trade of our Colonies, and it should be reckoned a matter of the greatest interest to us to deal with them rather than with foreign nations. I do not, of course, undervalue our foreign trade, nor need it be at all injuriously affected by increase of trade with the Colonies. But what I wish to point out is that an increase of our trade with the Colonies is of greater value than an equal increase of our trade with foreign countries. Trade benefits both parties, and if it is trade within the Empire, the Empire enjoys a double benefit—the benefit to us and the benefit to those with whom we trade, whereas in trade outside our borders there is only one benefit. I should deeply regret if in anything I have said I seemed to overlook the importance of this aspect of the matter—the great importance of a system of preferential trade within the Empire from the point of view of developing those great new countries under the British Crown, rather than developing countries whose wealth does not add, as their wealth does, to the strength of the Empire as a whole.

Moved, "That the debate be adjourned."—(*Lord Avebury.*)

On Question, debate adjourned till to-morrow, the debate to have precedence of other business.

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL [H.L.].

Read 2^a (according to order). Then it was moved to resolve, That it is desirable that the said Bill be referred to the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament to which the Companies (Consolidation) Bill [H.L.] and the Post Office Consolidation Bill [H.L.] are to be referred (*The Lord Chancellor*); agreed to: Ordered that a Message be sent to the Commons to communicate this Resolution and desire their concurrence.

COUNTY COURTS BILL [H.L.].

Read 3^a (according to order). Amendments (Privilege) made; Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

The Lords following were named of the Select Committee, viz.—

D. Bedford.	L. O'Hagan.
D. Rutland.	L. Avebury.
M. Bristol.	

The Committee to appoint their own chairman.

House adjourned at half-past Seven o'clock, till To-morrow half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 20th May, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Argentine North-Eastern Railway Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; An Amendment made; Bill to be read the third time.

Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

London United Tramways Bill.—Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to: Rochdale Corporation Bill, with Amendments.

Amendments to: Norwich Union Fire Insurance Society Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

Statute Law Revision Bill [Lords].—That they have come to the following

Resolution, viz., "That it is expedient that the Statute Law Revision Bill be referred to the same Joint Committee to which the Post Office Consolidation Bill and the Companies (Consolidation) Bill are to be referred."

PETITIONS.

BUILDING LANDS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Arbroath, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Kilburnie, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Penrhinceiber, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions for alteration: From Argyle; Perth; and Hamilton; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition in favour: From Alverstoke; Bassaleg; and Towcester; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Bishop Auckland; Dorchester; Edinburgh and Frome; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Gosport and Alverstoke, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aberaman; Abercynon; Aberfeldy; Aberystwyth; Bassaleg; Battersea; Bicester; Birmingham; Blackheath; Bradford; Buckley; Burton (Westmorland); Caerleon; Caerphilly; Caithness; Canisbay; Chorley; Conway Castle; Dowlais (two); Drumblade; Eastwood; Elsecar; Failsworth (three); Farnworth; Finchley; Gelli Pentre; Giffnock; Glasgow; Greenock; Hengoed; Hirwain (two); Hopton; Ilford; Kendal Kinneff; Leith; Lenmore; Longsight; Lowestoft Division; Luddenden Foot; Merthyr Tydfil; Muirton; Newcastle Emlyn; Northampton; North Shields; Norton Bridge; Ossett (two); Paulerspury (two); Ryde; Sheerness (two); Southowram; Stockport; Tottington; Towcester; Trewalis; Wallsend (four) Wellington; Weymouth; and Wick; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL AND ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Dorchester (Dorset), in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHTS ON VEHICLES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Arbroath, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions against: From Edinburgh; Hamilton; Kincardineshire; and Mid Argyll; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Alloa; Ayr; Burra; Cambuslang; Castletown; Comrie; Cupar; Dennistoun; Edinburgh (five); Errogie; Fairnington; Fortrose; Glasgow (seven); Grantown on Spey; Greenock; Halls; Invergordon; Johnshaven; Kingussie; Leith (two); Lesmahagow; Nethy Bridge; Newton Mearns (three); Perth (two); Pollokshaws (two); Rothesay; Roxburgh; Sandbank; Stonehaven; Tarbert; and Thurso; to lie upon the Table.

MAJI, SUBRAMANIA KATTO POMMIN NAIAK.

Petition of Subramania Katto Pommin Naiak Maji, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

OPEN SPACES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Arbroath, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Arbroath, against; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition of the Wandsworth and Putney Gas Light and Coke Company, against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

NATIONAL DEBT.

Copy presented, of Return showing: (1) the Aggregate Gross Liabilities of the State as represented by the Nominal Funded Debt, Estimated Capital Liability in respect of Terminable Annuities, Unfunded Debt, and other Liabilities in respect of Debt, the Estimated Assets, and the Exchequer Balances at the close of each financial year from 1835–6 to 1907–8, both inclusive; and (2) the Gross and Net Expenditure charged annually during that period against the Public Revenue on account of the National Debt, and other Payments connected with Capital Liabilities [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copy presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, No. 3999 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PAPER LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

Temporary Laws.—Register of Temporary Laws for the Third Session, Twenty-eigth Parliament, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, pursuant to the Report of the Select Committee on Expiring Laws in session 1866; to be printed. [No. 149.]

RIFLE ASSOCIATIONS (COLONIES) (GRANTS).

Address for "Return of the amounts of the Grants made during each of the last five years by Colonial Governments to Rifle Associations for the encouragement of Rifle shooting, and for the maintenance and expenses of Colonial representative Rifle teams."—(*Mr. Courthope.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Treasury Remembrancer, Ireland.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state when the office of Treasury Remembrancer, Ireland, was created; under what Act of Parliament or by what other authority it was created; and what are the chief powers and duties of the Remembrancer.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The office of Treasury Remembrancer was constituted by Treasury Minute dated 4th January, 1871. His principal duties are of a consultative character, as he advises the Treasury on such questions of Irish administration as are from time to time brought under the consideration of the Board. He is also head of the Dublin Pay Office.

Sick Leave of Mr. D. J. Long, of S.W. District Post Office.

MR. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the late Mr. D. J. Long, sorter at the South-Western District Post Office, London, was brought before the postmaster, Mr. Carew, on a discipline charge, on or about 21st February last, and was excused on the ground of ill-health; that, before Mr. Long saw Dr. Brabant on 28th February, he informed his colleagues that he was in a state of collapse, and, in anticipation of his obtaining sick leave, another officer had been told off to perform his duty, and that, notwithstanding this, Dr. Brabant told him that sick leave would do him no good; will he explain why Dr. Brabant did not examine Mr. Long on 28th February, or why, having failed to examine him, he refused to accept a private doctor's certificate with regard to his condition, or why he sent him back to duty on 28th February; whether Mr. Long was under any disability owing to technical irregularities in the matter of visits of private doctors; and whether Dr. Brabant had received any papers with reference to Mr. Long which prejudiced him against that officer.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Mr. Long was brought before the Postmaster at South-Western District on a charge of insubordination; but that officer, being of opinion that ill-health was at the root of Mr. Long's conduct, sent him to the official medical officer on 21st February. There is no evidence that Mr. Long informed his colleagues, before his second visit to the doctor on 28th February, that he was in a state of collapse; and the provision of an officer to perform his duty in case sick leave should be recommended was only the usual measure of precaution taken in such cases. Sick leave was not granted by Dr. Brabant, because there was nothing in Mr. Long's symptoms to indicate that it was essential; and on both occasions Mr. Long himself expressed anxiety to return to work. Dr. Brabant made such examination of Mr. Long as he thought desirable, having regard to his symptoms and appearance; and I see no reason to question the correctness of his treatment of the case. I am advised that no more extended examination would have revealed the approaching hæmoptysis, which could not have been forseen. It is not the case that Dr. Brabant refused to accept a private certificate furnished by Mr. Long. Such a certificate was received on 2nd March, and was returned by Mr. Long's superior officer for amendment in accordance with the rules. Dr. Brabant had nothing to do with its return. I am satisfied that Dr. Brabant was not in any way prejudiced against Mr. Long; and I must express my regret that a public insinuation against a member of the medical profession should be thus made.

Disposal of Funds of defunct Branch of Foresters Benefit Society.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): To ask the Postmaster-General concerning the Post Office account (No. 9040): in the name of the Dr. Croke branch (Radcliffe, Lancashire) of the Irish National Foresters Benefit Society, whether he is aware that the branch has for some time been dissolved; and, as one of the trustees of the account referred to declines to sign a withdrawal note for the purpose, whether he will authorise the transfer of the money to the Bury branch of the society, as desired by the other persons who have any claim on the money.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton*). I understand that the Dr. Croke branch of the Irish National Foresters Benefit Society was recorded by the Registrar of Friendly Societies as having ceased to exist some time ago; and if, as I gather from the hon. Member's Question there is a dispute as to the disposal of the money deposited in the Post Office Savings Bank in the name of the society, it is open to any of the parties interested to refer the matter to the Registrar of Friendly Societies. Payment would be made in accordance with the award of the Registrar.

Postal Deliveries at Hillhead and Kelvinside Districts of Glasgow.

MR. R. BALFOUR (Lanarkshire, Partick): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can now arrange to have the Hillhead and Kelvinside districts of Glasgow placed on an equal footing with the city proper, with respect to having the Continental, English, and North of Scotland correspondence arriving in Glasgow after 6.15 p.m. o'clock, included in the 7.30 p.m. delivery; and, if so, when such arrangements may be expected to be carried into effect.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am glad to be able to tell my hon. friend that this matter has now been satisfactorily settled, and that arrangements will be made without delay for affording the improvement of service to which he refers.

Congested Districts Board's Expenditure.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the total amount spent in each of the counties of Ireland included in the operations of the Congested Districts Board since its formation until 31st March last.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The following statement shows approximately the gross expenditure, including purchase price of estates and loans, in each of the congested district counties up to 31st March, 1907. The figures up to 31st March last are not yet available:—

	£
Donegal - - -	338,343
Leitrim - - -	17,017
Sligo - - -	148,969
Mayo - - -	1,544,522
Roscommon - - -	563,483
Galway - - -	593,590
Kerry - - -	262,270
Cork - - -	68,116

Purchase of the Estate of F. Naughten, near Boherbee.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland in reference to the estate of F. Naughten, near Boherbee, Millstreet Union, County Cork, Record No. 3,473, whether the Estates Commissioners can explain the delay in the completion of the purchase of this property; are the Comissioners aware that the necessary papers were lodged in January, 1906; why has not the estate been yet inspected; and whether in view of the inconvenience to the trustees and the tenants, the Commissioners will take steps to expedite the transaction.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) It is the fact that the papers in the case of this estate were lodged with the Estates Commissioners in January, 1906. The Commissioners deal with sales in the order in which agreements are lodged, and the estate in question has not yet reached its turn to be dealt with. The case cannot, in fairness to other purchasers, be taken up out of turn.

Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of Mr. John O'Driscoll.

Mr. FLYNN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have taken any further steps in regard to the reinstatement of Mr. John O'Driscoll on the Hegarty estate, Coolclogher, Banteer, County Cork; are the Commissioners yet made aware of the fact that this holding is unoccupied and with other lands adjoining used as a grazing ranch; and whether, under the circumstances, the Commissioners will put in force their powers under the Evicted Tenants Act with a view to the restoration of the evicted tenant.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have directed notifications to be published of their intention to put in force the compulsory powers of the Evicted Tenants Act in this case.

Rathmines and Rathgar District Council Audit—Production of Vouchers.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that it has been admitted by the clerk of the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council that certain vouchers were not in the offices of the council, and so were not open to the inspection of Messrs. O'Ratigan, Sullivan, and O'Driscoll, as required by Article 27 of the Public Bodies Order, 1904, during the seven days preceding the audit which commenced in Rathmines Town Hall on 25th October, 1907, the said vouchers relating to the accounts of the Rathmines and Rathgar Urban District Council for the year ended 31st March, 1907; and will he say whose business it is to see that Article 27 is carried out.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I refer to my Answer to the hon. Member's previous Question on this subject (14th April). The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The vouchers in question were not necessary for the purposes of the audit, as the payments to which they referred had already been passed by the taxing officer of the House of Commons. It is the duty of the clerk of the council to carry out the provisions of Article 27 of the Public Bodies Order. This article may be enenforced by mandamus on the application of any person interested.

Restoration of Evicted Tenants on the Oldrock Grazing Farm.

Mr. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the non-residential grazing farm of Oldrock, on the estate of Major O'Boyle, situate in the electoral division of Cloonoughill, Tubercurry Union, County Sligo, has been purchased by the present occupier, Mr. Robinson, under either the Land Purchase Acts of 1896 or 1903; and, if not, whether, seeing that thirty families were evicted from this farm within the last thirty years, the Estates Commissioners will be empowered to enter into negotiations with the owner of the estate, with the object of acquiring this land for the purpose of enlarging the small holdings surrounding it and providing farms for surviving members of the families of former evicted tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are unable to identify any proceedings under the Land Purchase Acts for the sale of the farm mentioned in the Question. No applications have been received from evicted tenants for reinstatement on Major O'Boyle's estate. The Commissioners already possess powers for the acquisition by voluntary agreement of land which may be suitable for their purposes.

Jurisdiction of Senior Inspectors of Irish National Schools.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, when senior inspectors of national schools were first appointed in 1900, they were given any jurisdiction over the district inspectors of their circuits; and, if so, will he produce a copy of the regulation on the matter; if no jurisdiction of the kind referred to was conferred in 1900 will he give the exact date on which, prior to January, 1707, such jurisdiction was first conferred, as also the full regulation bearing on the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that prior to 1900 there were six head inspectors who had general control over the district inspectors. In 1900 these head inspectors, together with sixteen district inspectors, were apopinted to be senior inspectors, and the twenty-two senior inspectors were given general control of the work of the district inspectors and other inspectors of inferior rank. The conferring of this control was notified by circulars of March, 1900, and April, 1901, the following extracts from which give the essential matter:—The senior inspector will be primarily responsible for the work of the circuit. The senior inspector, in addition to having special charge of an entire section of a circuit for a year, will have general control of the inspection of the circuit.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware of the discontent amongst inspectors of national schools owing to the way in which they are treated by some of the higher officials in the office; is he aware that the Commissioners notwithstanding say they know nothing about any such discontent; is he aware that inspectors are strictly forbidden from bringing their grievances directly before the notice of any individual member of the Board; and whether he will, under these circumstances, say why the Commissioners state they know nothing about the discontent, in view of the precautions taken to prevent any inkling thereof coming to their knowledge.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have referred this Question to the Commissioners of National Education, who state that inspectors have full liberty to bring alleged grievances, or other matters in which they are personally concerned, under the notice of the Board through the proper channels. Inspectors, however, are properly forbidden to attempt to influence the judgment of individual Commissioners by making private representations to them about such matters.

Deputy Returning Officers and Interference at County Council Elections.

MR. CONOR O'KELLY (Mayo, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is permissible for deputy returning officers under the Local Government Act, 1898, to take an active part in county council contests in favour of particular candidates in the districts in which they act as deputy returning officers; and, if not, will he intimate to the Local Government Board that they should advise the deputy returning officer for the Claremorris rural district to abstain from further interference in the election at present taking place in the Claremorris county electoral division.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The enactment dealing with the misconduct on the part of election officers is Article 11 of the Third Schedule to the Election Order of 16th February, 1899, which article is adapted from Section 11 of the Ballot Act of 1872. The Local Government Board have no powers in the matter. Any question which may arise as to the misconduct of an election officer is one for decision by a Court of Law.

Cost of Living in London and Dublin.

Mr. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can give a comparison of the cost of living between London and Dublin; and if he can give similar figures as to the cost of house rents of the working classes.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The hon. Member will find the information he seeks in the Report on the Cost of Living of the Working Classes [Cd. 3864 of 1908]. For his convenience I am arranging to send him a copy with the pertinent passages marked.

Patents Worked Outside the United Kingdom.

Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, under the Patents and Designs Act of 1907, British inventors will be liable to have their patents revoked, on the ground that the patented articles or processes are being manufactured or carried on exclusively or mainly outside the United Kingdom, in cases in which British manufacturers have declined to accept reasonable offers made by the patentee of licences to manufacture or work the patent inside the United Kingdom.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The patents in question will be liable to be revoked unless the patentee gives satisfactory reasons why the patented article is not manufactured or the patented process is not carried on to an adequate extent in the United Kingdom. It will be for the Comptroller in the first instance, subject to an appeal to the Court, to determine, after hearing the evidence on both sides in each particular case, whether the reasons given for non-working are satisfactory or not. It is, of course, impossible for me to say that the mere fact that one or more British manufacturers to whom the patentee may have made overtures, with the object of inducing them to work his patent, have not seen their way to accept such overtures can safely be relied upon by a patentee as a defence to an application for the revocation of his patent under the Act or to an action for infringement.

Increased Pay of Customs Outport Watchers.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury when it is intended to grant an increase of pay to outport watchers in the Customs Department; and if he is aware that the labourers employed by the Dublin Corporation have a much higher rate of wages than the watchers employed at Dublin.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) I have nothing to add to the reply given by my predecessor to this Question.

Pay of Ordnance Survey Labourers.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if the labourers employed in the Ordnance Survey, who are a special class of men, can be granted a minimum wage of 24s. a week; and if he will take into consideration the great expense these men entail in the cost of living, having to move frequently from place to place.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Perhaps my hon. friend will refer to the Answer I gave to a similar Question put by him on 16th March. Taking into account the advantages attaching to the employment of the men in question, such as comparative permanency, no loss of time by wet weather, free medical attendance, sick pay, and holidays, the Board do not think that there is any sufficient reason for the alteration of the present scale of pay.

Bolinbroke Hospital and the Weir Bequest.

Sir HENRY KIMBER: To ask the hon. Member for the Elland Division, as representing the Charity Commissioners, if he will state under what power, whether statutory or otherwise, the Charity Commissioners sanctioned the handing over by the trustees of the Weir bequest the sum of £5,000 out of the trust funds to the governors of the Bolingbroke Hospital before a scheme had been published, and without giving the parishioners of the parish of Streatham an opportunity of knowing of or protesting against such diversion of the trust money; whether the Charity Commissioners will lay upon the Table a Report of the public inquiry held last November at Balham into the administration of the trust, and their decision thereon; whether he is aware that Mr. H. G. Hills, one of the Weir trustees, who had been offered by the Bolingbroke Hospital on 16th October last a life governorship of such hospital on the following day wrote and declined the same; whether, on the day before the Wandsworth Borough Council met to elect three representatives to the committee of management of the trust in place of the retiring members, the trustees of the said fund co-opted two of such retiring representatives to be life trustees; whether such co-optation was in direct contravention of the terms of the said will; and, if so, whether any steps have been, or will be, taken to remove such illegally appointed trustees, or to prevent them from acting in the administration of the trust.

(*Answered by Mr. Trevelyan.*) The circumstances in which the Charity Commissioners sanctioned the payment of £5,000 to the governors of the Bolingbroke Hospital were explained in the Answer given by me to a Question by the hon. Member on 23rd March last. The Report made to the Commissioners in the result of the inquiry held last November is confidential. The decision of the Commissioners upon it will be shown in the scheme which is in preparation for publication. The Commissioners have been informed by Mr. H. G. Hills that he declined to accept nomination as a life governor of the Bolingbroke Hospital. The co-optation referred to by the hon. Member was of two persons to be members of the committee of management. It was invalid. The committee is not constituted, and the only trustees of the charity are those appointed by the will.

Repayment of National Debt.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state what was the total sum charged against the revenue of the year for the repayment of Debt in the year 1907–1908 corresponding to the figures for previous years in Column 1, Appendix IV. of the National Debt Return [Cd. 3476]; and what it is estimated will be the corresponding sum in 1908–1909.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The corresponding figures are—

	£.
1907–8 - - - - -	13,224,910
1908–9 (estimated)	11,920,000

Customs and Excise Amalgamation.

CAPTAIN CLIVE (Herefordshire, Ross): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under the amalgamation of the Customs and Excise services foreshadowed in his Budget speech, there will be one examination for appointments to the two services, or different ones as before; and whether slight defect of vision, which is at present tolerated in the Excise but constitutes a bar to the Customs service, will debar from both services.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Until further progress has been made it would be impossible to answer Questions relative to the detailed arrangements which may be involved in the scheme.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state at what date the new scheme for the amalgamation of the Excise and Customs Departments will become operative; whether it will involve any change in the qualifications with regard to height or otherwise of students for appointment in the Excise; and, if so, what will be the nature of the change.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Until further progress has been made it would be impossible to answer Questions relative to the detailed arrangements which may be involved by the scheme.

St. Patrick's Day—Army Ordnance Department.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary of State for War if arrangements could be made to allow the employees of the Army Ordnance Department in Dublin a holiday on 17th March in common with all Government employees in Dublin.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) St. Patrick's Day is allowed to the Army Ordnance Department employees in

Ireland as a public holiday on the same conditions as for Admiralty employees, namely, without pay and without the right of making up lost time.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Admiralty Cement Tenders.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what was the minimum quantity of cement required in the invitations issued to cement manufacturers to tender for the Admiralty cement contracts.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The quantity of cement indicated in the invitations to tender was approximately 10,400 tons, this being the anticipated requirements for one year for all naval establishments at home and abroad in the Director of Works Department; but the actual amount ordered will depend on the actual needs during the course of the year, and will not necessarily amount to 10,400 tons.

MR. COURTHOPE: Was the amount required so large that it was necessary to leave out some of the firms usually invited to tender?

MR. MCKENNA: Yes, Sir; certain of the firms were left out for that reason.

MR. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty which firms of cement manufacturers were invited to tender for the Admiralty contracts; and what is the estimated annual output (in tons) of each.

MR. MCKENNA: It is undesirable to disclose the names of competing firms, and I must beg the hon. Member not to press for them.

MR. COURTHOPE: I will not press for the names.

MR. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what firms of cement manufacturers who have usually been invited to tender for Admiralty contracts were this year omitted; and what is the estimated annual output (in tons) of each.

I beg also to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any firm or firms of cement manufacturers who have usually supplied cement to the Admiralty, but have this year not been invited to tender, have complained of the omission and requested that they may be allowed to tender; whether such requests have been granted or refused; if the latter, upon what grounds; and what is the estimated annual output (in tons) of each of such firms.

MR. MCKENNA: There was only one firm of cement manufacturers which we considered capable of meeting our requirements and which we have invited on previous occasions, but have omitted this year. If the hon. Member has the authority of the firm in question for asking for a disclosure of its name, I am prepared to give it as well as the grounds upon which it has been excluded on the present occasion.

MR. COURTHOPE: I have not the authority of any firm to ask the information, but I should like to have it.

MR. MCKENNA: Without their authority I do not think it advisable to name the firm or to give the reasons why they were not invited to tender on the present occasion.

Naval Volunteers Lands Bill.

MR. LAMONT (Buteshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty when he expects to proceed with the Naval Volunteers Lands Bill, of which notice was given on 29th January.

MR. MCKENNA: I propose to introduce this Bill and proceed with it as soon as the exigencies of Parliamentary time permit.

Woolwich Arsenal Storehouse Clerks.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, prior to 21st February, 1902, the present staff of storehouse clerks at Woolwich Arsenal and dockyard were designated as, and performed the duties of, assistant foremen; whether the duties these men now perform are practically the same as they were before the name of the staff was altered, being mainly clerical and of a responsible nature; and whether the storehouse clerks would have participated in a scheme for the granting of pensions which was under consideration on the date mentioned had they been allowed to retain their former title.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. ACLAND, Yorkshire, Richmond): These storehouse clerks were designated assistant foremen and performed duties similar to those they now perform. The designation was changed because the name storehouse clerk conveys more accurately the nature of the duties, which consist largely of simple clerical work, not of a responsible character, and also of manual labour when required. The foreman's pension scheme did not extend to assistant foremen, and therefore these men would not have participated in it had they retained their former title.

Volunteer Long-Service Medal.

MR. H. H. MARKS (Kent, Thanet): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether a Volunteer not yet qualified for the long-service medal, and who has enlisted in the Territorial Army, will be entitled to count his service in the Territorial Army in addition to his service in the Volunteer force in applying hereafter for the medal.

MR. ACLAND: The various questions involved in the mode of reckoning service towards a long service medal have not all been finally settled, and I am not, therefore, in a position at the present moment to make any definite statement, but I can tell the hon. Member that the service which a member of the Territorial Forces has previously rendered in the Volunteers will certainly be taken into account in reckoning his eligibility for the long-service medal.

The Mohmand Rising.

*MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if the British troops now invading the country of the Mohmands are destroying the villages and burning the crops and stores of corn of the villagers.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): We have no detailed information beyond what appears in the telegrams, but I understand that destruction of the towers of the villages, and in some cases the burning of stores of corn, have been among the punitive measures inflicted on the tribesmen, who, as the hon. Member is aware, made unprovoked raids into British territory and committed murder and pillage upon British subjects.

*MR. LUPTON: May I ask the hon. Member if it is a fact that in the recent operations against the Zakka Khel we did not burn the villages and that these people are now our friends?

MR. BUCHANAN: I cannot answer that Question without notice.

*MR. LUPTON: Is it the fact that in the late Afghanistan War we did burn the crops and orchards and exasperated them so that they drove us out of the country?

[No Answer was returned.]

Taxation in British East Africa.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what were the taxes per head of the white and of the coloured population of British East Africa respectively for the year 1907; and what is the amount paid by members of the white community in rents, licences, registration fees, and fees for land sales and cattle sales, and what is the amount similarly paid by the coloured community.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Colonel SEELY): My hon. friend has asked me to reply in his absence. The Secretary of State will ask the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate for an estimate of the amounts contributed under the several heads by the white and coloured community.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Cannot an answer be given now as to the amount paid per head?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have no doubt the Colonial Office will supply whatever information it can.

Chinese in the Transvaal Mines.

MR. TIMOTHY DAVIES (Fulham): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will give the number of Chinese coolies employed in the Transvaal mines on 1st July, 1907, 1st January, 1908, and 1st May, 1908.

MR. RUNCIMAN (for Colonel SEELY): The figures received are for the last and not the first days of each month. They show for 30th June, 1907, 51,517; for 30th December, 1907, 37,118; for 30th April, 1908, 24,059.

Alcohol.

MR. LUPTON: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what are the percentages of absolute alcohol in the beers brewed in England and Wales; what is the average percentage of absolute alcohol in the beers brewed in England and Wales; and what are the percentages of absolute alcohol in spirits, such as brandy, gin, rum, and whisky, in the diluted mixtures as generally retailed in England and Wales.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): The Board of Inland Revenue have not the information necessary to answer either part of my hon. friend's Question.

Brewers and Income-tax.

SIR HENRY KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is proposed to exempt from the payment of income-tax such profits of brewers and publicans and hotel and other companies as are applied as sinking funds to pay off their capital or the mortgages or debentures charged on their property.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: No, Sir. A company or firm is chargeable to income-tax upon its full profits estimated according to the Rules of the Income-Tax Acts, without reference to the purposes to which such profits may be applied.

France and the Death Duties.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the total number of estates particulars of which have been furnished to the French Government under the provisions of the death duties agreement of 15th November, 1907, in respect of the quarter ended 31st March last.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Fifty-four, Sir.

Fraudulent Traders and the Police Gazette.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the police have made any inquiries in reference to their published list of trading firms, against which frequent complaints have been made; and, if so, will he say what the result of such inquiries have been; how many firms are set out in the *Police Gazette* as suspicious; are any of these Irish; and, in view of the constant frauds perpetrated on the public, will he publish the trading names of the firms involved so as to limit their operations.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): In every instance the police make inquiries before including firms or associations in the list of doubtful traders which appears in the *Police Gazette*. It would not be advisable to state the result of such inquiries, or to publish either the names of, or any particulars concerning, trading firms or associations so included.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY: Can I have a copy of the *Gazette*? Would not the publication of the information asked for lead to the prevention of crime?

MR. GLADSTONE: I am afraid I can add nothing to what I have said. The matter is being carefully considered.

London Police Helmets.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he would favourably consider the desirability of allowing the Metropolitan Police to wear a straw helmet, or a helmet of some light material, in hot weather instead of the heavy head-covering that is compulsory at present.

MR. GLADSTONE: The question of supplying the Metropolitan Police with a special head covering for use during very hot weather has been the subject of consideration on many occasions, but it has not been found possible to provide a suitable substitute for the helmet at present in use. I am informed that without the identification plate, etc., a Metropolitan Police helmet weighs 8½ ounces, and that an ordinary top-hat weighs 6½ ounces. The present helmet cannot, therefore, be regarded as unduly heavy, in view of the necessity of its affording protection to the head against blows.

Hops and Hop Substitutes.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the estimated value of the hops and of hop substitutes, respectively, used in the brewing industry in 1906, and the average in both cases for the years 1902–6.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): No information is available with regard to the value of either the hops or hop substitutes used for brewing in the United Kingdom in recent years.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: May we not hope that the right hon. Gentleman will so reorganise his Department as to be able to collect useful information of this kind in order to supply it to the House?

*MR. LUPTON asked whether it was the fact that the amount of hops used was such that a 40s. duty would mean £1,300,000 a year extra to be paid by the brewers?

[No Answer was returned.]

Royal Commission on the Poor Law—Report.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether there is any prospect of the Report of the Royal Commissioners on the Poor Laws and Relief of Distress being presented before the rising of the House in August; and, if not, whether it is intended that any interim Report of evidence submitted to the Commissioners will be presented and made available, and when the completed Report is expected to be presented and available to Members.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): The Royal Commission have just finished hearing evidence and are now considering their Report. They are not without hope that they may be able to present it in the autumn, but it is impossible to give a precise date by which it will be issued. The reply to the latter part of the Question is in the negative. The Commissioners at the outset of their proceedings, and on subsequent occasions, decided that it would not be advisable to publish the Evidence before the Report.

Leeds Vaccination Prosecution.

*MR. LUPTON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he is aware that Ernest Leonard, of 27, East Park Parade, Leeds, was taken to Armley Gaol, on Thursday, 14th May, 1908, for the non-payment of fine and expenses inflicted for the non-vaccination of his child; that Leonard had consented to the vaccination of his children if the lymph with which it was to be done would be guaranteed free from small-pox and other disease, and that this guarantee was refused; and if he will guarantee that in future all vaccinating lymph supplied by the Local Government Board shall be derived from a source free from small-pox.

MR. JOHN BURNS: My attention has not been called to the case mentioned in the Question. As I have frequently stated, the lymph supplied from the Government lymph establishment is in all cases derived direct from the calf. I cannot always say what may have been its original source, but the lymph used at the establishment is usually obtained by vaccinating calves with vaccine lymph obtained from children, and in no case is lymph used there unless it has been passed through a series of calves.

MR. LUPTON: Did not the evidence recently given before a Royal Commission show that the lymph now used by the Local Government Board was originally derived from small-pox and might therefore be calculated in certain cases to produce small-pox?

MR. JOHN BURNS: I should prefer notice of that Question.

Barnsley Vaccination Case.

MR. LUPTON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that Mr. Percy Sant, of 56, Bridge Street, Barnsley, has received a notice from the vaccination officer to have his child vaccinated notwithstanding the fact that he made a declaration under the Vaccination Act, 1907, before a justice of the peace on 27th February, 1908 (his child having been born on 23rd January, 1908); and whether he will inquire into the matter with a view to preventing any further action on the part of the vaccination officer.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have no information at present as to this case, but I am making inquiry with regard to it.

Llandaff New School.

MR. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education how many school places in the proposed new school at Llandaff are considered to be necessary to meet a deficiency of accommodation.

MR. RUNCIMAN: The population in this district is continually increasing and it is, therefore, difficult to estimate the number of places which may, on a numerical basis, be required in the next year or two. The actual shortage in school places at present is about forty.

MR. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education what is the amount of the building grant which it is proposed to pay in respect of the new council school at Llandaff.

MR. RUNCIMAN: Not more than £1,000.

Purley National School Mistress.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether, in view of the recent dismissal by the school managers of the mistress of the national school of Purley, without any charge against either her character or her capacity, and in view of the fact that the education committee of the Berkshire County Council disclaim having any right to interfere, he will take steps to provide by future legislation that a school teacher shall have an appeal to a higher authority against dismissal by the school managers.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I do not understand that in the case referred to the local education authority disclaimed having any right to interfere, but that they considered it advisable, in the circumstances, not to exercise the right which they undoubtedly possess. While, as I have previously stated, I regret the decision at which they arrived, I am of opinion that the right of appeal to the local education authority which the existing law affords is, as a rule, a sufficient safeguard against capricious action on the part of school managers.

MR. MACKARNESS: Then, Sir, is it the fact that under the existing law a school teacher has an appeal from the school managers to the county council?

MR. RUNCIMAN: Yes, Sir, that is the position as we understand it.

Promotions in His Majesty's Customs.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state the number of promotions per annum from the assistant class to that of examining officer in His Majesty's Customs during the past seven years, the length of service of the assistants before promotion, and the number of assistants at present on their maximum salary.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): The following statement gives the information requested—

Year.	Number of Promotions of Assistants to Examining Officers, 2nd Class.	Average Length of Service on Promotion.					
		As Assistant.		As Outdoor Officer.		Total.	
		Years.	Months.	Years.	Months.	Years.	Months.
1901	120	5	5	3	1	8	6
1902	46	5	1	3	6	8	7
1903	49	5	6	3	9	9	3
1904	43	5	11	3	5	9	4
1905	73	6	5	—		6	5
1906	54	5	8	—		5	8
1907	34	6	1	—		6	1

Number of Assistants who are at their Maximum ... 2.

His Majesty's Customs—Clerical Branch.

MR. SUMMERBELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state the number of grades there are in the clerical branch of His Majesty's Customs Department; and how many of the different titles or grades carry similar salaries.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I beg to refer the hon. Member to pp. 4, 5, 6 and 8 of the published Estimates, from which it will be seen that the male clerical establishment comprises—

	Classes.
In the Secretary's Office - -	5
" Accountant-General's Office - - - - -	5
" Statistical Office - -	6
" Port establishments - -	9

Several of these classes are common to two or more branches. But there are two classes in the Secretary's Office having the same scale of salary as different classes in the Statistical Office; and one class in the Accountant-General's Office having the same scale as a different class in the Statistical Office.

Carnarvon Crown Lands.

MR. ELLIS DAVIES (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the extent of the Crown land in the county of Carnarvon; whether such land is subject to any, and, if so, what, rights of common; and whether, on the sale of Crown land in the county, the Crown can pass the fee freed from any rights of common.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The total extent of the Crown land in the county of Carnarvon (excluding foreshore) is about 8,661 acres. Of that area about 8,258 acres are subject to rights of common of pasture and the remaining 403 acres are the freehold property of the Crown not subject to rights of common. No sale by the Crown of land can have the effect of freeing the land from any rights of common to which it was legally subject at the time of the sale. The areas I have mentioned are exclusive of lands in which the Crown has mineral rights only.

County Court Accounts in Post Office Savings Bank.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the accounts of the County Court Department will enable him to state how much money was standing in the Post Office Savings Bank to the credit of the Registrars of County Courts on 31st March last, or on the latest date to which the accounts are made up.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: On 31st December last, the latest date to which the accounts are at present complete, the amount standing in the Post Office Savings Bank to the credit of the Registrars of County Courts was £469,595.

Land Registry Office.

Mr. ROWLANDS (Kent, Dartford): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can say when the account of the receipts and payments of the Land Registry Office for the year ending 31st March will be issued, seeing that under the Act of 1867 they are required to be laid before Parliament one month after that date.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: In order to prepare the Return which is annually presented it is necessary to obtain accounts from several Departments of the expenditure incurred by those Departments on behalf of the Land Registry. Expenditure incurred so late as 31st March cannot always be verified and appropriated to the proper head of service in time to be presented by 30th April; but every effort will be made to complete the Return as soon as possible.

Death Duties.

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the Agreement respecting Death Duties with France is intended to apply to those persons who may happen to die in France when wintering there or residing there for short periods.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: No, Sir. The reference is not to persons dying in France, but to the deaths of persons owning property in either country.

Mr. FELL: Does that apply to English subjects wintering in France and dying there owning at the time more than £100?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I must have notice of that Question.

Mr. FELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the Agreement respecting Death Duties with France was suggested by the French Government or was proposed by the Secretary of State; and whether any Papers referring to the negotiations will be laid upon the Table of the House.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: The Agreement was suggested by the French Government. The Agreement itself has been published and it is not proposed to lay any Papers on the subject.

Mr. FELL: Is there any precedent for such an Agreement as this being published?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I cannot say offhand.

Mr. FELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the words all persons domiciled in France, contained in Article I. of the Agreement between the United Kingdom and France respecting Death Duties, are intended to refer to the deaths of French subjects in England.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: The reference is to persons domiciled in France whether they are French subjects or not.

Mr. FELL: I hope the hon. Gentleman can tell me to whom this does really apply. Do the English Government supply particulars when Frenchmen die in London?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: It is a very technical question. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put it down.

Mr. FELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what are the frauds in connection with succession duties referred to in the Agreement respecting Death Duties recently signed with the French Government.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: The reference is not to specific instances of fraud, but to the prevention of possible fraud.

Mr. FELL: Shall we have an opportunity of discussing this matter and thus elucidating it?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I have no power to answer that Question.

Mr. FELL: On what Vote can it be raised?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I should imagine on the Foreign Office Vote, but I am not certain.

Mr. FELL: Well, a fortnight ago I put down a Question on it to the Foreign Secretary, and was referred to the Treasury.

Mr. O'Dowd, M.P., and Cattle-Driving.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that in the course of a speech recently delivered by the hon. Member for Sligo (South) to the Nationalists of South Sligo, North Roscommon, and North Leitrim, he stated that he himself advocated a temporary cessation of hostilities till they could see what the Government's amending Land Bill was like, that, after all, when the Chief Secretary said he would introduce a measure of so far-reaching a character as the promised Bill the least they should do would be to suspend hostilities till the Bill was produced, but, if it was found unsatisfactory, then by all means let them get the hazel, and not for a moment hesitate to drive the cattle, that his advice was not to be too particular as to what methods they employed, there was a wealth of good in the hazel, and they could not do better than have it in readiness; and whether he intends to take any, and, if so, what action.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) asked whether, in the event of legal proceedings being taken as a result of this Question against the Member for South Sligo, the Chief Secretary would see that regard was had to the Statute passed in the reign of Queen Anne which laid it down that a portion of the fine inflicted must go to the common informer.

Mr. BIRRELL: I have no doubt the statutory law will be observed. The hon. and gallant Member has sent to me a newspaper report of a speech stated to have been delivered by the hon. Member for South Sligo at Riverstown on 3rd May. That report represents the hon. Member to have used language to the effect stated in the Question. The hon. Member is stated to have given advice as to what should be done in a certain contingency which may or may not arise some time hence. However objectionable such advice may have been—supposing that it was given—it does not seem that in the circumstances any proceedings against the hon. Member could be sustained.

Mr. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): Has the right hon. Gentleman taken any steps to ascertain from the police or other persons whether or not the speech was correctly reported?

*Mr. BIRRELL: I cannot say at the moment whether the police were there taking a shorthand note, and, of course, we cannot depend on memory.

Captain CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in certain parts of Ireland a great deal of importance is attached to what falls from people in public positions, and will he take steps to prevent the use of language obviously intended to incite to cattle-driving?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member had better put his Question down.

Irish Local Government Board Secretary.

Mr. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland who is the Secretary of the Local Government Board for Ireland, and the date of his appointment, what appointment he previously held, and at what salary; whether his salary has recently been increased by £100, contrary to regulations; and, if so, for what reason.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Secretary to the Local Government Board is Mr. A. R. Barlas, who was appointed to that position on 8th September, 1905, and who up to that time had been assistant secretary at a salary of £750 a year. Mr. Barlas was advanced to the maximum salary on 1st November, 1906, in consideration of the largely increased duties and responsibility thrown upon him by the Labourers Act of that year. There are no regulations prohibiting such advance.

Irish Local Government Board Inspectors.

Mr. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland for what season it is proposed to appoint this year five new temporary inspectors under the Local Government Board for Ireland; by whom will they be appointed; what qualification will be necessary; and what will be salaries and duties of the office.

Mr. BIRRELL: It is not proposed to appoint any new temporary inspectors under the Local Government Board. The provision of £2,500 in the Estimates is necessary in order to provide for the continued employment of the temporary inspectors who have been engaged at the rate of two guineas a day upon inquiries under the Labourers Acts. The appointments were made by the Local Government Board. No qualifications are prescribed, but care is taken to select experienced and suitable persons.

Irish Local Government Board—Vice-President's Private Secretary.

Mr. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state who is the private secretary to the Vice-President of the Local Government Board for Ireland, and when was he appointed.

Mr. BIRRELL: The private secretary to the Vice-President is Mr. S. Watt, one of the members of the clerical staff. He was appointed private secretary on 1st February, 1907.

Irish Local Government Board Commissioners.

Mr. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland why it has been arranged that a substitute will have to be provided and paid on 220 out of the 300 or 305 working days of the year ending 31st March, 1909, to do the work of Commissioner of the Local Government Board for Ireland.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estimates for the current year contain the usual provision for a *locum tenens* during the possible absence of one of the Commissioners on temporary Commissions or vacation, or in consequence of ill health or any other sudden or unforeseen emergency. The making of this provision does not necessarily imply that a substitute will have to be employed for the number of days provided for.

Doneraile Untenanted Lands.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have been made aware that on the estate of Lady Castletown, Doneraile, County Cork, there are now approximately over 500 acres of untenanted land, all in grass; and whether, with a view to the acquisition of suitable holdings for the evicted tenants of the surrounding districts and of allotments for industrious labourers of the locality, the Commissioners will take action under the Land Purchase Acts at an early date.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have recently been informed by the hon. Member that certain lands on the estate of Lady Castletown are available for the purposes mentioned in the Question. The Commissioners are accordingly making inquiries in the matter with a view to acquiring the lands if possible.

Tannagh Farm Cattle-Drive.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of cattle-drives that have taken place off Tannagh Farm, near Riverstown, County Sligo; the number of arrests made; and if any sentences have been passed on the perpetrators of the outrages; and, if not, why not.

Mr. BIRRELL: The police are aware of but one cattle-drive from the farm in question. This took place on the night of 4th May. The police have been unable to trace the offenders and consequently no arrests have been made.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many cattle-drives have taken place between 25th April and 10th May in the East Riding of County Galway, the number of persons arrested, the number of convictions, and the cost of conveying the persons arrested, together with the police, to the various court-houses.

MR. BIRRELL: During the period mentioned there were thirty-five cattle-drives in the East Riding of Galway, and 266 persons were arrested, of whom 241 were bound to keep the peace. The cost of conveying the persons arrested together with the police to the various court-houses was £123.

In reply to a further Question MR. BIRRELL said the cost of conveyance before committal was borne by the county rates.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG asked if the fact that 240 out of 260 persons had been bound over to keep the peace had resulted in reducing the number of cattle-drives?

MR. BIRRELL: Time alone will show that.

Condition of Galway.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Mr. Horne, R.M., who was recently sent to County Galway to study the condition of the district, has yet submitted his Report; and whether he recommended that the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act should be put in force; and, if so, will the Irish Executive act on his recommendation.

MR. BIRRELL: I would refer the hon. and gallant Member to my Answer to his Question on this subject on 4th March, to which I have nothing to add.

Irish School Lesson Books.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will publish as a Parliamentary Paper all the correspondence which has reached the National Board of Education in Ireland on the subject of Brown and Nolan's Sixth or Advanced Reader, as well as the Memorandum from the Chief Inspector, a protest from the Elementary Education Committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Memoranda from individual Commissioners, a letter from the editorial secretary of the Imperial Protestant Federation, copies of minutes of the Board on the subject, and any other memoranda or protests; and whether any steps are to be taken to withdraw the reader.

MR. BIRRELL: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that they do not consider that any useful purpose would be served by the publication of the correspondence and other documents referred to in the Question. Brown and Nolan's Advanced Reader for the sixth standard is not one of the books which have been sanctioned by the Commissioners for use in National Schools, and in all cases in which it has come to the knowledge of the Commissioners that the book was in use they have called on the managers to have such use discontinued.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: May we take it that every precaution will be taken to prevent its being used in the future?

MR. BIRRELL: I have no doubt the Commissioners will do their duty.

Montalt Estate, Tipperary.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on the 6th instant about sixty persons illegally entered on the Montalt estate, Tipperary, lately purchased by the Estates Commissioners, and ordered the Commissioners' engineer, who was dividing up the property into small holdings, to cease work, and theatened that no further operations would be permitted until a guarantee was given by the Estates Commissioners that certain persons chosen by the United Irish League should be supplied with land, and that the Rev. Mr. Duboe, the Protestant clergyman, should not be given the late agent's house, though the same adjoins his church and is eminently suitable for a rectory; will he say whether the Commissioners' engineer stopped work at the command of these persons; how many police were present; and what course do the Estates Commissioners intend to pursue in the matter.

Mr. BIRRELL: I am informed that the facts are not as stated in the Question. On 5th May about twenty-five labourers assembled on the road adjoining the Montalt estate which has been purchased by the Estates Commissioners and upon which the Commissioners' surveyor was marking boundaries. Two of the number entered upon the land and asked the surveyor to cease work until the labourers claims were satisfied. The surveyor replied that he could not do so, but he offered to forward to his Commissioners any representation the labourers desired to make. The two men thereupon retired; they used no threat, and made no mention of the United Irish League, or of the Rev. Mr. Duboe, or of the agent's house. The surveyor completed his work without interference. A district inspector and fourteen policemen were present. It is the intention of the Commissioners to sell the late agent's house to the Rev. Mr. Duboe.

Kynochs' Factory, Arklow.

Mr. MULDOON (Wicklow, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fatal accident which occurred on 11th May at the Kynoch Factory, Arklow; whether he will ascertain if the occurrence arose from preventable causes; and, if so, will remedial measures be taken.

Mr. GLADSTONE: My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. The accident referred to was notified to and investigated by the factory department. From the report which I have received, it appears that the accident, which happened while the man was putting a belt on a shaft in motion, was preventable. The shaft was fenced as required by the Factory Act, but the men in charge of the machines appear to have been allowed by the management to go inside the fencing while the machinery was in motion. The firm has now given an undertaking that in future no one will be allowed inside the fencing while the shaft is in motion.

Average Attendance at Elementary Schools in Ireland.

Mr. MURNAGHAN (Tyrone, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the average number of children in daily attendance at the elementary schools in Ireland for the year 1907; can he give respectively the number at national, model, and Christian Brothers schools; and can he state the cost per head to the public under the different headings.

Mr. BIRRELL: In 1907 the average daily attendance at all national schools including model schools, was 485,979, and at model schools alone, 6,803. The expenditure per head from State sources on the schools and teaching staffs was: At all national schools, including model schools, £2 13s. 9d., and at model schools alone, £5 11s. 11d. The Commissioners of National Education have no information as to the attendance at, or cost of, Christian Brothers schools or any other than national schools.

Mr. MURNAGHAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the children attending these schools are the children of very poor parents; that as far back as the year 1893 the Liberal Government admitted the claims of these voluntary schools to State-aid; that an assurance was given that a settlement would be arrived at before the end of that year, and is it not time now that effect was given to that assurance?

Mr. BIRRELL: I have no recollection of or responsibility for the statement, which I believe was made and I would give effect to it if I could, but I am afraid I cannot.

Congested Districts Board Work.

Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the total amount spent in each of the counties of Ireland included in the operations of the Congested Districts Board since its formation until 31st March last.

Mr. BIRRELL: Particulars of the expenditure of the Congested Districts

Board up to 31st March last will not be available for some time, but I will furnish with to-night's Votes a statement giving the Board's expenditure by counties up to 31st March, 1907.

*MR. KILBRIDE: How much money from the Congested Districts Board went to buy Scotch potatoes, so called, that were grown in Ireland?

[No Answer was returned.]

School Inspector Murphy.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state in how many cases of dismissals, depressions, fines, and reprimands of national school teachers has Senior Inspector Murphy, of the National Education Board, lately of Armagh and at present of Limerick and Clare, been directly identified in the said districts and elsewhere; is the number of such unusual; and, if so, will an inquiry be instituted into the conduct, methods, and procedure of the said inspector.

MR. BIRRELL: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that they could not give the information asked for without a detailed investigation of the work of the senior inspector in question since his appointment several years ago, but in any event the Commissioners consider that it would be against the interests of the public service and detrimental to the efficiency of their inspection staff to furnish any such information.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether the number is unusual, and if it is would that not be a good ground for ordering an investigation?

MR. BIRRELL: I have no control over the Commissioners of National Education, but I can quite understand that such a body would be reluctant to expose any particular inspector in this way unless there was reason to believe he did not discharge his duties properly.

De Montalt Estate, Dundrum.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received particulars of a disturbance upon the estate of the late Earl de Montalt, at Dundrum, Tipperary, on Thursday, when an inspector of the Estates Commissioners attended to divide the land; whether the police had to intervene; what was the cause of the disturbance; and what assurances were given by the representative of the Estates Commissioners to those who objected to the division.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed that no disturbance took place on the occasion in question. On 14th May the Estates Commissioners' inspector was giving possession to tenant purchasers when a considerable number of men entered upon the land, and their spokesman asked the inspector why the claims of the labourers had been ignored. The inspector replied that the Commissioners had already intimated to the rural district council that they were prepared to provide land for labourers' cottages if the council should so desire. The party then dispersed peaceably, and the inspector proceeded with his work without interference. No assurances were given by the inspector.

Mr. Keaveny, J.P.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Lord Chancellor has taken any action with reference to the language used by Mr. J. Keaveny, J.P., at a public meeting on Sunday, 19th April, at Tulsk, County Roscommon.

MR. BIRRELL: The Lord Chancellor informs me that he has been in communication with Mr. Keaveny upon this subject, and that gentleman denies having used the language attributed to him in the newspaper reports. In the circumstances the Lord Chancellor has no materials upon which he can take any further action in the matter.

Irish Universities Bill.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Standing Committee of the Irish Catholic Bishops have signified their approval of the Irish Universities Bill.

MR. BIRRELL: I have neither obtained nor sought any information as to the Standing Committee of the Catholic Bishops. As several of that body have expressed their willingness to serve on the proposed temporary governing bodies of the new University of Dublin and its colleges, I assume that they are not opposing the scheme.

Ballygrehan Cattle-Drive.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has particulars of a cattle-drive at Ballygrehan grazing lands, County Leitrim, on Friday night; how many cattle were driven off the lands; were the police present; and were any persons arrested.

MR. BIRRELL: On the night of 9th May, sixty-five head of cattle were driven off the Ballygrehan grazing farm, County Sligo. The police were not present. No arrests were made.

Irish Royal College of Surgeons.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has considered the claims of the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland to receive treatment equivalent to that which is to be given under the new University scheme to the Catholic University School of Medicine in Cecilia Street, Dublin; and whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

MR. BIRRELL: The claims which have been advanced by the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland are under consideration.

Cattle-Driving in Ireland.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a cattle-drive took place on 14th April last, at 12.55 a.m., off the farm of Mr. R. St. George Robinson, of Seamount, County Sligo; can he state how far from Old Rock the cattle were when found by the police, what arrests have been made, and what sentences passed on the perpetrators of the outrage; and further, on 12th May, whether several, and, if so, how many, drives took place off grazing farms in the Gort district, how many arrests, and what sentences; and further, on Sunday morning, 10th May, whether several, and, if so, how many, drives took place off Captain R. Fowler's farms at Rathmolyo, Trim, South Meath, how many arrests, and what sentences; and whether in any of these cases the cattle driven were found to have suffered injury, and if claims for compensation have been lodged.

MR. BIRRELL: Mr. Robinson's cattle were driven off his farm on the date mentioned and were found by the police ten miles away. No arrests have been made. On 12th May a cattle-drive took place at Annagh Farm, near Gort. The majority of the persons concerned were dispersed by the police, but a small section succeeded in driving off some ewes and lambs. Twenty-six persons were arrested, of whom twenty-five have been bound to keep the peace. On 10th May cattle-drives took place from three farms near Trim, belonging to Captain Fowler. No arrests have been made in these cases. Claims for compensation have been lodged in all of the cases. The question whether the cattle sustained injury will be for the decision of the Courts.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the cattle drivers in Galway are no longer satisfied with driving the owners' cattle off the land, but now drive their own cattle on to it?

MR. BIRRELL: I have heard that that objectionable practice prevails.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Have not the efforts of the right hon. Gentleman to stop cattle-driving absolutely failed?

MR. KILBRIDE: Will the hon. Gentleman consider the advisability of distributing in these cattle-driving districts copies of the speeches made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover in 1903?

[No Answer was returned.]

Mr. T. W. Russell, M.P., on Cattle-Drives.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the number of cases which have recently come to light of cattle suffering injury through being driven many miles off farms in the darkness of night, he will issue a memorandum counteracting the statement made, on behalf of the Government, by the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture, that cattle-driving did no harm either to man or beast.

*MR. BIRRELL: I am not aware that my hon. friend the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture has made on behalf of the Government any statement with reference to cattle-driving. It is, however, the fact that in the great majority of cases which have come under the notice of the police there has been little actual cruelty to the cattle. In some cases the animals have been exhausted from over-driving, and in a few cases lameness has been observed. The Question appears to suggest that my hon. friend has made some statement in palliation of cattle-driving. I have not had an opportunity of communicating with him upon the subject since the Question was put down.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Is it not the fact that the President of the Board of Agriculture actually made this statement and has not denied having done so? In view of the increasing number of cases in which the cruelty to animals driven at night have been admitted by the right hon. Gentleman will he issue from the Irish office a Memorandum pointing out the cruelty?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must give notice of the Question.

Crookenden and Casey Estate County Cavan.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state whether the Estates Commissioners have yet made the formal proposal to purchase the Crookendon and Casey Estate, County Cavan, and whether the same has been accepted; and, if not, will he say what is exactly the present position of this estate.

MR. BIRRELL: A formal proposal for the purchase by the Estates Commissioners of the estate in question is in course of preparation, and the Commissioners hope to issue it at an early date.

Arrests of Women in the Night.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the, district of Mount Bellow, County Galway, sixteen women were arrested by the police at the hour of 3 a.m., in April last, and driven to Ballinasloe, twenty miles distant, upon a cold, bitter morning; and if so, was it necessary to arrest them at that hour; could they have been charged in the morning at Mount Bellew; and what amount did it cost to convey those women to Ballinasloe.

MR. BIRRELL: On 27th March, between 3 and 5 a.m., three men and fifteen women were arrested in the Mount Bellow district upon a charge of unlawful assembly. The police authorities considered it to be in the interests of the peace of the district that the arrests should be made early in the morning. The defendants were conveyed before the resident magistrate at Ballinasloe, nineteen miles distant, and were by him ordered to give sureties to keep the peace, which they did. It was in accordance with the usual practice that the defendants were taken before the resident magistrate and not before local justices. The cost of conveying them to Ballinasloe was £29.

In reply to a further Question by Mr. Roche,

MR. BIRRELL said he regretted the arrests were made at so early an hour in the morning, but it was not always possible to prejudge the hour of arrest.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR: Why not send people like this a letter asking them to come in?

MR. BIRRELL: I should be quite willing to adopt the course.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to put down this driving of men and women?

[No Answer was returned.]

Irish Evicted Tenants.

MR. JOHN ROCHE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many evicted tenants upon the Clanricarde estate have applied up to date for reinstatement; how many have been reinstated; and how many provided with new holdings.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have received 163 applications for reinstatements from evicted tenants on the Clanricarde estate. So far as the Commissioners are aware none of the applicants have been reinstated in their former holdings. Ten of them have been provided with new holdings on estates purchased by the Commissioners.

Ulster Catholics and University Education.

MR. C. J. O'DONNELL (Newington, Walworth): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what action the Government proposes to take in order to give the Catholics of Ulster equality of opportunity, seeing that the Belfast University and the college at Derry are practically closed to them; and whether he still proposes to deprive the Ulster Catholics of the resource of obtaining University degrees by private tuition or private study.

MR. BIRRELL: I should be very sorry to think that the measure now before the House might have the effect of debarring any body of Irishmen from University education. If, however, the new Universities are to be Universities in fact as well as in name, it will be necessary to hold fast by the provision that only those students shall be admitted to degrees who have been taught in the Universities or affiliated colleges.

MR. C. J. O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the reason for appointing only one Catholic out of thirty-five members of the governing body of the proposed University of Belfast, seeing that the Catholic population of Ulster is equal to the total number of Protestants of all denominations: and whether he is aware that all the organs of Protestant opinion in Ulster disclaim responsibility for this exclusion of Catholic Ulstermen from an University said to be unsectarian.

MR. BIRRELL: The selection of a fully representative and otherwise satisfactory governing body is a matter of much difficulty. I should be glad if it could be arranged that some additional representative Catholic Ulstermen could be added to the governing body of the Belfast University.

Irish University System.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received any representations to the effect that private students from provincial schools and colleges should be admitted to the various examinations and degrees under the contemplated Irish University, as well as to participate in the honours, prizes, exhibitions, scholarships, etc., of such University; and will he state whether effect will be given to these needs in his University scheme.

MR. BIRRELL: I have received certain representations which go to show that there are still some people in Ireland who are satisfied with the Royal University system, that is to say, the system of a mere examining body as distinguished from a teaching University. I am convinced, however, that the view in question is not generally held in Ireland.

Irish Paupers—Removal Regulations.

MR. MURNAGHAN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the protests made by boards of guardians in Ireland against the inequality that exists in respect to the removal of paupers in different parts of the United Kingdom; is he aware that English Poor Law authorities are empowered to send back to Ireland persons of Irish birth who are past work and no longer able to support themselves, while Irish authorities have no such power in regard to those of English birth found destitute in Ireland; is he also aware that the law enables Poor Law authorities in Scotland to return to Ireland people of Irish birth grown too enfeebled to be serviceable, even though most of their lives were spent in Scotland, unless it can be shown that the person to be deported has resided for five consecutive years in one particular Poor Law area; and will he take the matter into consideration with a view to a removal of the grievance.

MR. BIRRELL: The law and practice as to the removal of paupers is correctly stated in the Question. The Vice-Regal Commission on the Irish Poor Laws have recommended that the English and Scottish Removal Acts should be repealed so far as they relate to Ireland, and this recommendation will doubtless be considered by the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws of the United Kingdom which is at present sitting. The question will also receive the careful consideration of the Irish Government in connection with the proposed Bill for amending the Irish Poor Laws which I hope to introduce next year.

Armagh Laundry Prosecutions.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case heard at Armagh Petty Sessions on 14th instant, in which a local laundry firm was convicted of having habitually worked six female employees from ten o'clock on Sunday nights to seven o'clock on Monday mornings, and then, with short intervals for meals, continued to work these females until seven o'clock on Monday nights; whether he is aware that the resident magistrate said he thought it was a deliberate case, and inflicted a fine of only 3s. in each case; and whether he will direct a more rigid and thorough inspection of such firms in future with a view to the prevention of similar breaches of the Factory and Workshops Acts.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have received a Report on this case from the Factory Inspector. The offence charged was the serious one of employing women from 10.30 on Sunday evening, 29th March, to seven o'clock on the following Monday evening. It is the case that a penalty of 3s. only was imposed in respect of each of the twelve cases taken, but this was the decision of the majority of the Court and not of the resident magistrate who, according to the newspaper reports, stated that he would have imposed a heavier fine because he considered it a deliberate case. The action of the inspector has been successful in securing the detection and punishment of these breaches of the law, and I see no occasion for giving any special instructions to him on the subject. It is not in my power to give instructions to the magistrates, but I cannot help saying that it becomes almost impossible to secure the enforcement of the Factory Act if a serious offence, committed deliberately and after full warning, is so inadequately punished.

Royal Hibernian Academy.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he has had an opportunity to consider the representations made on behalf of the Royal Hibernian Academy, and the Reports of the Committee appointed to inquire into the best means of enabling the academy to fulfil its functions; and whether, seeing that the academy has already put before the Treasury the businesslike and concrete scheme to which his predecessor in office, speaking in this House, in March, 1907, promised sympathetic consideration, he can say whether any, and, if so, what decision has been arrived at.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I have made myself acquainted with the Reports of the Committee and with the later proposals of the Royal Hibernian Academy, which do not seem to me thoroughly satisfactory. I fear that I cannot undertake to provide out of public funds the whole cost of a new site and building on the scale suggested by the Academy.

MR. BOLAND: Will the Irish Members have an opportunity of considering the proposals of the Treasury?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I have no objection to that at all.

Natal Act of Indemnity.

MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): I beg to ask the Prime

Minister whether, having regard to the fact that there is no precedent for an Act of Indemnity in the circumstances prevailing in Natal and to the importance of the constitutional questions involved, he will afford Parliament an opportunity of discussing the matter before any Act of Indemnity passed by the Legislature of Natal is assented to.

SIR GILBERT PARKER asked whether, in view of the appeal of the late Under-Secretary for the Colonies that Questions should not be asked which would produce irritation ["Oh, Oh"] in the minds of those Colonies enjoying responsible self-government, the right hon. Gentleman would use his influence with the followers of the Government not to ask Questions such as this, which were likely to be resented.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL asked whether, having regard to the correspondence published between the Imperial Government and the Government of Natal, in which strong condemnation of the conduct of the Government of Natal was expressed by the Imperial Government, the House would have an opportunity of supporting the Government.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I will confine myself to answering the Question on the Paper. My hon. friend is aware that the passing of an Act of Indemnity may be the most effective way of putting an end to the continuance of martial law. No Bill of the kind can, I understand, be introduced into the Natal Legislature before June, and I will see that on an early Supply day, the Colonial Vote is put down, and an opportunity given for discussion.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Will the Report of the Commission on Natal Affairs be carefully considered by the Colonial Office?

MR. ASQUITH: It has been considered.

Board of Agriculture Vote.

MR. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash): I beg to ask the Prime Minister when the Vote for the Board of Agriculture will be taken.

MR. ASQUITH: The Vote will be taken on 10th June.

MR. LANE-FOX: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that that is immediately after the holidays, and it will be most inconvenient for the agricultural Members to be back? The same course was adopted last year. There is a strong agricultural element who wish to discuss several matters.

MR. ASQUITH: What?

MR. LANE-FOX: The Swine Fever Regulation, for instance.

MR. ASQUITH: I see no reason for altering the date. It is inconvenient for everybody, but not more so for the agricultural Members than others.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent, St. Augustine's): The agricultural Members should not suffer the same inconvenience two years running.

NEW BILLS.

NATIONAL FLAG.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) asked leave to bring in a Bill to provide for the due display of the national flag on certain occasions in Great Britain and Ireland, more particularly on Empire Day. He said that in consequence of replies which had been given to a number of Questions put to various Members of the Cabinet during the past few days, he had taken the only step he could think of in order to impress upon the Government the importance of flying the flag on Empire Day. Hon. Members below the gangway took very good care to fly a certain flag in Dublin on a certain day and they might extend the courtesy and gratify the desire of probably the largest section of the loyal people of the Empire to see the flag flying on public buildings, in London. The Prime Minister had said yesterday at Question time that he saw no reason to depart from the precedent of those who were in office before him. But no one would deny that during the past few years there had been a growing desire throughout the country to celebrate Empire Day. In the Senate House in Canada a few days ago, when the question was raised about the flying of the flag in Canada, the reply of the Prime Minister, if he had been correctly reported, was very apt. He said that if the Government here had no desire to fly the flag, they in Canada at any rate would fly it all the oftener. This short Bill would make it obligatory on Ministers of the Crown to fly the British flag over their offices on Empire Day and would also give permission to fly the flag over the national schools in Ireland where the majority of the parents, the pupils, and the managers, acquiesced in so doing. He would remind the House of the words used by the Prime Minister on the Motion for the adjournment the previous night. He said—

> "If the noble Lord would from time to time give him such information as was at his disposal as to the growth of a general desire for this particular form of manifestation on the part of the children of the Empire it would receive his most respectful consideration."

They thanked the Prime Minister for the courteous way in which he met the request addressed to the Front Bench. The right hon. Gentleman said that he was following the precedent of those who went before him, but there could be no question that Empire Day was more generally celebrated now than in the days of his predecessors. A very interesting function was taking place even that day at Croydon where the school children were unfurling a flag presented by the Agent-General for New South Wales. After all, the taxpayers of the country paid for the erection of the War Office, the Admiralty, and the other great buildings in which right hon. Gentlemen opposite exercised their offices, and the great bulk of those taxpayers would undoubtedly rather see the flag flying over those buildings on these occasions than see the bare flag-staff. The flying of the flag would also be a great gratification to the many Colonial visitors who came to this country. It would show them that we, at home, were anxious to assist the Empire movement in other parts of the world. Then again this particular part of the Empire was often visited by foreigners, and it was desirable that we should impress upon them that this little bit of country was not all we had to show them—that outside the United Kingdom we had an Empire. We ought to emphasise that fact on every possible occasion. The Bill had the cordial approval of the loyal section in Ireland where it was proposed to give permission to hoist the national flag over the national schools.

A NATIONALIST MEMBER: Fly them over the breweries.

CAPTAIN CRAIG said the Bill would inflict no hardship on hon. Members below the gangway, because it was especially stipulated that where the majority of parents did not desire to fly the flag they need not do so. He would only say in conclusion it would be a graceful act on the part of the Prime Minister and his colleagues to grant the request of the people of this country. It took a long time to obtain the privilege of flying the national flag over the Houses of Parliament, and a certain number of hon. Members did not think it a waste of time to keep on, as long as they had the privilege of sitting in that House, asking that the flag should also fly over the chief Government offices in London.

Motion made, and Question put, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide for the due display of the National Flag on certain occasions in Great Britain and Ireland, more particularly on Empire Day."—(*Captain Craig.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 88; Noes, 156. (Division List No. 99.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F.
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Ashley, W. W.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, Rt Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Baring, Capt. Hn. G. (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beck, A. Cecil
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Brodie, H. C.
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount

Cave, George
Chamberlain, Rt Hn. J. A. (Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Cleland, J. W.
Clive, Percy Archer
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.)
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crossley, William J.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Gordon, J.
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hill, Sir Clement
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lamont, Norman
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Paulton, James Mellor
Pirie, Duncan V.
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Radford, G. H.
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Forster and Viscount Valentia.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Bennett, E. N.
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Bryce, J. Annan
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Clancy, John Joseph
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Cullinan, J.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Esslemont, George Birnie
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ffrench, Peter
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Fullerton, Hugh
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Gulland, John W.
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Healy, Timothy Michael
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. D.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'gh
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S).
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E).
M'Crae, George
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N)
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morse, L. L.
Muldoon, John
Murnaghan, George
Murray, Capt. Hn A. C. (Kincard)
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Power, Patrick Joseph
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Seddon, J.
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.

Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Thomas, David Alfred(Merthyr
Toulmin, George
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stephen
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Waterlow, D. S.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. George Roberts and Mr. Patrick O'Brien.

LOCAL REGISTRATION OF TITLE (IRELAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend The Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Act, 1891," presented by Mr. Muldoon; supported by Mr. Long, Mr. Fetherstonhaugh, and Mr. John Redmond; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 232.]

LOCAL TAXATION, NATIONAL DEBT, AND ASSESSORS [PAYMENTS].

Committee to consider of authorising the payment of an annual sum, out of the Consolidated Fund, to the Local Taxation Account, and of increased allowances to Assessors of Taxes, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, and of authorising the application of the surplus of income over expenditure for the year ending the 31st day of March, 1908, (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

POISONS AND PHARMACY BILL [LORDS].

Report in respect of the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill [Lords] (pending in the Lords), with Minutes of Evidence, brought up, and read.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 150.]

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Third Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Amendment to Question [18th May], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Which Amendment was—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Lord Balcarres.*)

Question again proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. BELLOC (Salford, S.), resuming his speech which was interrupted at eleven o'clock last night, said that the Bill, like the Act of 1902, was intended to bring about a unified system of elementary education. The only question was how were they to deal with one or more sections of the community for whom a unified system was impossible? If the exceptions were very large or very numerous he could understand the difficulty of dealing with them. If an exceptional body of men were lukewarm in their demands he could understand that the Government might have some difficulty in recognising their claim to be placed outside the common law. He thought he had said enough about the strength of the Catholic claim. There might be other claims as strong, there might be other bodies as determined, but he confessed he did not know of them and he hoped he would be able before he sat down to show that it might be possible to reconcile even their claim with the present plan of the Government. If they wanted to measure the strength of the claim they had only to look upon the large number of working-men and women who, out of their small weekly wage, sacrificed considerable sums for the maintenance of their schools. Their claim ought certainly to make an impression on politicians because they were the only body whose vote had been affected by the proposals of the Government. If hon. Members would go into the decrease in the Liberal vote at the recent bye-elections in Great Britain—for instance, at Wolverhampton and North-West Manchester—they would see that that decrease was almost identical with the strength of the Catholic vote. The loss of Liberal seats had been ascribed to many causes and he granted that many votes given against the Government were largely the result of the Licensing Bill, but at least one-half of the decrease of the Liberal poll at Wolverhampton and North-West Manchester, if not the whole of it, could be accounted for by the loss of the Catholic vote. Under these circumstances he was the more surprised to hear the Member for North-West Manchester speak of the Catholic vote in the terms he did yesterday—he was certainly jeopardising his seat. What were the methods by which an exceptional claim of this kind could be met? In the first place the method which appealed to the more democratic Members of the House was what was known as the secular solution. As a Catholic that solution did not appeal to him; at the same time he recognised that it was a logical and a just solution and in many Catholic communities it suited the Catholic temper and had been a success. They had something like the secular solution in Ireland to-day. The reason why it did not suit the temper of the Catholics of this country was that, no matter how much they attempted to make the system purely secular, it would certainly remain and must remain in tone and atmosphere a Protestant, and an English Protestant, system. They might forbid the teacher to use certain phrases or to allude to certain facts, they might forbid this or that in the curriculum, but they could never prevent the teaching having a Protestant atmosphere. The hon. Member for Peterborough had told them the discomfort he felt in being asked to believe the two stories about Elisha. Nowhere save in Protestant England would such a difficulty have arisen, because such a story would never have been taught in any school. When the hon. Member was arguing in favour of secular education anybody belonging to the Catholic Church listening to him would have said he was a Protestant. The allocation of the rates for this purpose had been advocated powerfully and logically, and it had at its back the example of one of the great Colonies, but the system would not work because the division upon the subject was so difficult in this country. There were little towns in Sussex where the principal ratepayer would perhaps be a Catholic, and he could show instances where the principal ratepayers would control all the funds so allocated. He did not think that that was a practical solution in this country. It was not practical to have a dual system, because not only did this country possess a great number of Protestant sects, but there had existed a rivalry between them ever since the days of the historic past. There was still too much difference between the various theological opinions of our people to adopt the dual system of Germany, Switzerland, or Canada. The right of entry was probably the solution which would recommend itself in the long run to the Protestants; but for the Catholic community of this country he saw nothing practicable but something on the lines adopted in this Bill. The phrase "contracting-out" had been given more than one meaning. If it meant an attempt to get rid of the Catholic minority of course the Catholics could not accept it. If it meant the entire exclusion of Catholics from the national system it was evident the Catholic minority could not accept it. He did not think there was any danger of either of those things happening, and the only question was the amount of money which would save the Catholic schools. He did not think the 47s. grant would save them. In a constituency like his own where there were 3,000 or 4,000 Catholic children they could not meet a difference of £13,000 out of the pockets of the parents of those children. In London the thing was manifestly ridiculous, because 47s. would not nearly meet the claim of any denomination. They were told that the Government had not made their declaration sufficiently clearly to enable them to make up their minds. They knew that a settlement was on the point of being arrived at and that the country was heartily sick of the whole matter. Merely slipping back into the old conditions was impossible. A settlement was demanded because everybody wanted the thing out of the way. The country wanted a settlement and could only get it on the general lines laid down in this Bill.

Therefore he intended to vote for the Second Reading. If in Committee it appeared that the minimum amount allowed to those who chose to put themselves on Imperial taxation and not on the rates involved sacrifice but was still enough for them to survive he should accept that proposal. That could only be arrived at by consulting the clergy and managers of the various districts, and unless such an amount was given he did not think anyone could conscientiously vote for the Third Reading and he certainly would not do so. He was confident that between the two stages of the Bill which remained that demand would be fully satisfied and therefore he should vote for the Second Reading.

*COLONEL R. WILLIAMS (Dorsetshire, W.) said that during the last two days the question of compromise which at first was but faintly mentioned had been growing in importance all the way through. The speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty was an attempt at compromise, and that effort very much crystallised in the speeches of the right hon. Member for Dover and the President of the Board of Education. The remarks to which they had just listened showed still more that compromise was a thing very much to the front. The hon. Member for Salford had given reasons why he meant to vote for this Bill, and he said he had hope of a compromise. He himself intended to vote against the Bill also in the hope that a compromise might be arrived at. He would like to ask the Government whether it was worth while taking the vote at all, because if it was taken on the Government policy it would be a strictly party vote and would not mean anything in the country. If it was taken on the Bill itself with the desire to find out anything about compromise it was certain that contracting-out must go, because hardly anybody had said a good word for it, and if it were pressed it would mean the defeat of the Government, which he imagined was a thing the Government were not anxious to court. The more contracting-out was looked at the more impossible it seemed to be, because it was an absolute reversal of the concordat of 1870. It was also a denial of the aspirations of the party on the opposite side at the last General Election when it was claimed that there should be only one national system of education. Contracting-out was either a real offer meant to settle the question once for all, or else it was, he would not call it a sham, but a way of getting rid of the denominational schools by degrees, in which case it was not an offer which ought to be made. He thought the proposal for contracting-out had been rather helped forward by what had been said by the last speaker in regard to the 47s. grant. They wanted to know what the Government considered ought to be the cost per child in the schools. Was it to be the same as it was under the London School Board or the 61s. or 62s. per child under other local authorities? What was the proportion they were going to ask the contracting-out schools to pay for giving their own denominational education? When the Government had settled that they ought to make up to the contracting-out schools the amount requisite to bring them up to the level of the other schools. If the Government were not prepared to do that it seemed to him that to fix the 47s. limit and leave contracting-out schools to be starved where the local expenditure was extravagant and to go on where the local expenditure was not so large had no principle in it at all. There was a suggestion in the speech of the hon. Member for the Faversham Division to which he would like to refer. The hon. Member laid down as essential popular control, no tests for teachers, no public money for denominational teaching, and adequate provision for denominational teaching at the expense of the particular denomination. He did not himself propose anything of the sort. It was not for Members of the Opposition to make proposals. The Government were asking a round table conference on this question, and, after all, the Government were there for the purpose of bringing before the House measures for discussion. The responsibility was with the Government, and with nobody else. and no round - table conference could ever gather together that authority which would enable them to bring in a Bill which would pass through the House without discussion. Therefore, he hoped the Government would take every possible step in their power to inform themselves of the opinions of every section in the House and out of it. The responsibility must be left with the Government itself as to the lines to be taken. Therefore, he did not think that a round-table conference as a legislative or quasi-legislative body was really of any use. But this line of compromise having been suggested from the other side of the House, he wanted from that side to give it a word of welcome. It seemed to him that the hon. Member for Faversham went on to foreshadow a national system of publicly controlled schools with compulsory undenominational teaching on all days, with on two days of the week the right of denominations to come in and give their own teaching at their own expense. That proposal met everyone of the points of importance in the controversy. It met the question of popular control. He had always thought that the one mandate the Government got at the last general election on this question was that there should be thorough popular control. He was confirmed in that opinion because the House of Lords passed the first clause of the 1906 Bill which embodied that principle. The system of one set of schools entirely under the local authority would satisfy the claim for popular control, and it would also meet the claim that there should be no tests for teachers. What was a test? It seemed to him that there was a good deal of misunderstanding over the word test. Originally the test was that any applicant for office must prove publicly that he was a member of the Church of England. That test was very rightly abolished. That was a test for teachers which, of course, ought never to be applied. No man should be asked by a local authority to what particular denomination he belonged, but, if it was desired, as he believed a majority of the House desired, that there should be compulsory Bible teaching given in all the schools, the local authority, although they might not ask a teacher to what denomination he belonged, had a right to ask whether he was prepared to teach every part of the curriculum. The local authority had as much right to ask an applicant for a teachership if he was willing to give Cowper-Temple teaching as to ask him if he was willing to teach history. If Bible teaching was part of the regular curriculum, there would be no test to ascertain whether the teacher was a Churchman, a Nonconformist, a Quaker, or anything else, but there would be the right to ask whether he was willing to undertake this particular teaching. There were many schools where men would not be needed for this particular teaching, and the teacher would be at liberty to give the teaching if he liked, but there was no real freedom of conscience for the men and women in one of the most honorable and hardest professions to say if they did not desire to be cut out from what they regarded as the chief part of their work, that the local authority should come down and say, "You shall not give it." It seemed to him that that was not liberty, but tyranny, and if they were to preserve teachers from the tyranny of tests they had to preserve the right of conscience to teachers to give denominational teaching if they liked. If the opinions of the parents in the localities were sought, he would like to suggest that the syllabus should not be prepared merely by the county council, but that some Committee should be set up in connection with every local authority—a committee appointed authoritatively by the various religious bodies—which might meet to settle the syllabus to be taught in the schools. In his own county there was a committee of the kind he had indicated, and almost every denomination was represented on it. It would be helpful to a great many parents to feel that the common Christianity which was taught was not only imposed by a secular authority, but was also recommended by the heads of the various Churches. In that case they would feel that their interests had been attended to by the head of their own denomination. He was not going to labour the point as to secular teaching. He was quite certain that the people of England as a whole did not desire anything of the sort. The last point mentioned by the hon. Member for Faversham was that there should be adequate provision for denominational teaching at the expense of the denomination.

It had been said by an hon. Member opposite that the right of entry to schools might lead to a great deal of confusion. That would be so if every religious denomination and sect in the country desired to go into the schools to teach. But it should be remembered that all the Nonconformists and Free Churchmen did not want denominational teaching in the schools. Therefore, none of them would desire to go into the schools at the denominational hour. If they were going to have religious freedom on five days of the week for those who did not want denominational teaching in the schools, they were bound in honesty to give opportunities in school hours for those who did want it. If there was really to be any religious toleration at all, they were bound to provide these opportunities. That was the sort of compromise to which he would give his assent. The object of the Government and of hon. Members in all parts of the House ought to be not merely to settle a long-standing controversy, but to adopt the best means they could for getting children taught the common Christianity in which they all believed. That was worth having, and that compromise appealed to him because it demanded sacrifices from both sides. It demanded from Nonconformists that they should agree to Churchmen entering all the council schools to give denominational teaching during some part of the week, and it demanded from Churchmen very great sacrifices, because they were asked to allow the schools which they had built, and which they had cherished long before others took an interest in education at all, to be used for a form of religious teaching which did not satisfy them. These things involved sacrifice, but they all knew that the greater the sacrifice anybody made for a cause the greater the good results which flowed from their exertions. The question was in the hands of hon. Members on the other side of the House. It could never be solved by a Conservative Minister with a Conservative majority. It was only a Liberal Minister who was powerful, with the backing of Nonconformists, who could solve this question. What proposals were the Government going to make? Were they going to maintain the right of the majority to trample on the consciences of those who disagreed with them, or were they going to rise to the height of their responsibility and give the country a national system of education founded on Christianity, and so put an end to a strife, the continuance of which would be a disgrace, and an end to the fear of secularism which would be a disaster.

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR (Liverpool, Scotland) said he was sure that everybody who had heard the speech of the hon. and gallant Member for West Dorset welcomed its tone. He had followed the discussion of the last two-and-a-half days, and he did not think that it had advanced the House much towards the settlement of the education question on the lines which the hon. and gallant Gentleman had set forth. But if he might express an opinion on a matter which was outside his sphere, it seemed to him that there was ground for a reasonable compromise, and he was glad to see the suggestions of the hon. and gallant Gentleman received so favourably on the other side of the House. From his point of view, however, the hon. and gallant Gentleman had left out of his calculation one important community—the Catholic. The settlement suggested was essentially one between the different communities of the Protestant religion. That was a settlement for which they on the Irish Benches had always done their best, so far as it was decent or permissible, and in favour of which they had said as much as they could. In fact, they had never stood in the way of an educational settlement. But it was with reference to the Catholic case that he asked the permission of the House to speak. He would also count the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition among the peacemakers, although he waited with some curiosity to learn the particular method by which the right hon. Gentleman would vindicate that view, for he observed that when the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education declared, in answer to the hon. Member for North-West Manchester, that this was not a question on which any party could dictate terms from the Treasury Bench, that sentiment was taken up and applauded by the right hon. Gentleman. He hoped that when the Leader of the Opposition came to state his view of the case, they would be able to arrive at a settlement in which one party did not dictate to the other. This Bill was, from his point of view, far less generous or fair to the Catholic case than the Bill of 1906. He did not want to cry over spilt milk or over a lost Bill; but he held now, as he held at the time, that the Bill of 1906 proceeded on a most admirable, most practical, and the wisest line, in dealing with the question. He had not the smallest doubt that the Government in proposing contracting out as a means of dealing with the question, were inspired by the best motives. He was sure that they thought it was a scheme which would, to the largest extent, meet the Catholic case; and, on the other hand, that it was the best scheme to meet their own difficulties that their supporters would allow them to propose. He thought that contracting out was the worst method of dealing with the subject, but for his own part he would accept contracting out if there was no other method. He, however, would oppose it as long as he could, as unjust to the Catholic case, to the Catholic citizens, to the Catholic taxpayers and ratepayers, and, above all, to the young generation of Catholics, whose educational efficiency would thereby be jeopardised. As to the figure of the grant proposed by the Government, he personally believed that were it as generous as it was scandalously inadequate, the fact would always remain that no grant given by the Government to the Catholic schools would be equal to the grant plus the rates given to the council schools. If the Government were to add 13s. and make the grant 60s. as against 40s. as at present, still it would be less than the grant given to the council schools, plus what was given by the ratepayers. His position was that the Catholic as a ratepayer had a right to an equal share with the Protestant ratepayer in the education rate. What was contracting out? It was a getting rid of all popular control. He was in favour, under proper conditions, of popular control of all schools—Catholic and Protestant schools alike. But what said the President of the Board of Education? He said, "If you demand popular control, you must accept all the conditions of popular control, including the government of your schools, in every particular, and the payment of the teachers. What right have you," said the right hon. Gentleman, "to insist that a school should be on the national system and yet escape the national conditions?" [MINISTERIAL cries of "Hear, hear."] He thought he had put the case fairly, as he gathered from the applause. That appeared to him to be rather an agonising question to ask. It was most ably answered by the President of the Board of Trade in what might be described as significant and pathetic terms. For the first time in the whole history of this controversy a Minister of the Crown, not in answer to a question, not in answer to the hon. Member for Walton Division, not as a matter of higgling and wriggling and bargaining and extortioning on the rack, but in a published address to his constituents had established the Catholic case. He said that whereas different communities of Protestants were, of course, in disagreement on many most important and vital questions, yet in essentials they were in agreement; but that between the Catholics and the Jews—their case was the same—and every Protestant community whatever, there yawned a deep and impassible gulf and irreconcilable difference. That was the Catholic case. It was perfectly distinguished by the fact that the Catholics were in a minority, and everybody acknowledged, and especially the Nonconformists, that the religious liberties of the minority required more safeguarding and vigilance than those of the majority. There was another point—the economic point. It was too much forgotten that this question of the elementary schools was largely a case of social class and money. To the sons of the wealthy classes in this country the elementary school was a matter of comparative indifference. The great public schools were open to the sons of the rich, and when they had passed through those, the great Universities in this country and on the Continent were open to them. Some hon. Members who had spoken in the debate had had the advantage of a University training not only in this country but on the Continent. But the elementary school was essentially the school of the poor and of the lower middle classes, and therefore he maintained that the question of the elementary school was largely a question of social class and pecuniary resources. Who were the Catholics of this country? The hon. Member for Louth rather astonished him when he said that he regarded the Catholic community in England as wealthy. The hon. Member must have been thinking of the Million Fund with which his name was so honourably associated, and was confusing the prosperous Wesleyan middle classes with the Catholics as represented in this country. It was quite true that the Catholics of England by race were wealthy or belonged to the well-to-do classes. He supposed that that was the reason they were so anti-Irish; but everybody knew that 90 per cent. of the Catholics of this country were Irish. And what were the social position and pecuniary resources of the Irish Catholics of this country? Everybody knew that nine out of ten of them belonged to the working classes—the hardest worked class with the smallest wage. They came to this country with untutored minds, with unskilled hands. Driven from their homes by hunger and plague they came to England and Scotland, not because they preferred this country to their own, but because they had not the means to take them to America or Australia. In the whole of the Irish tragedy there was nothing more tragic or pathetic than the spectacle of the Irish poor in the slums and the lanes of England and Scotland. If they wanted to find the Irish Catholics in England or Scotland they had to look for them in the atmosphere of the chemical works, before the retorts of the gas-works, or shivering in the winter outside the portals of the great docks in Liverpool. What did education mean to this class? It meant that it ought to be cheaper for them than for any other community, and more efficient. It was true that they had as a basis of education those intellectual gifts which, in spite of their disasters, still belonged to the Irish race; but these needed to be sharpened by modern educational methods. When he opposed contracting-out he did so not on theological grounds, but because he thought it was doing gross injustice to the poorest of the poor. What did contracting-out mean? It meant fewer teachers, worse teaching, worse food, fewer books, worse equipment, larger classes. But he was not going to quote his own words in regard to contracting-out. He thought the Secretary to the Admiralty was beginning to look a little self-conscious, and well he might. He had with him an extract from a speech the hon. Gentleman made on the proposal of his hon. friend opposite—the Member for Preston—

> "The mover of the Amendment (the hon. Member for Preston) appeared to have forgotten that if his proposal were accepted, contracted-out and voluntary schools would have to live on the present grant. He would give figures to show how absurd the proposal was in the interest of the Catholic schools."

The figures taken were those of Manchester. At Manchester the hon. Gentleman said the cost per child was £4 4s., and the Government grant £1 19s. 7½d. Was it conceivable, exclaimed the hon. Gentleman, that the Roman Catholics of Manchester could raise voluntarily the sum of £2 4s. 4½d. per child? He could not be so neat as the hon. Gentleman, because his powers were not so great and his case was not so bad, because it was only £1 17s. that had to be found. But was the case of the Government this — that under this Bill the Roman Catholics had to raise £1 17s. 0d. only as against £1 19s. 7½d? It would be absolutely impossible, said the hon. Gentleman, for the schools interested to maintain themselves properly under the Government grant. The thing was preposterous, and the only effect would be to strangle the schools. But if that was true of the proposal put forward by the hon. Member for Preston, it was not the less true of the proposals put forward by the Government. It had been said that the Roman Catholics wished to keep their schools outside the national system. On the contrary, they wanted them to be part of the national system. Under the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary they were part of the national system of education of this country, and the Nationalist Members supported, at the risk of some misunderstanding, the right hon. Gentleman on the division upon it. It would be much to be regretted if this Bill passed in its present form. He would like to see the Government with courage enough to go back to the proposals of Clause 4 of the Bill of 1906, under which the Catholic schools were included in the national system of the country and subject to public control. The Catholic schools were to a large extent under public control at this moment. They were under control at Liverpool, and what happened? He welcomed the statement of the hon. Member for Louth, which possessed great importance as coming from an hon. Gentleman holding his position, that no body of sane Protestants would send a Protestant teacher to teach the Roman Catholic religion to Roman Catholic children. But what he failed to understand was the objection to that simple proposition's taking the form of an Act of Parliament. Once the principle of appointing Catholic teachers to the Catholic schools was admitted, then by logic and reason the principle of Catholic doctrine being taught to Catholic children must be accepted also. He had observed in the debate some unexpected supporters of that proposition. Everyone knew what point of view one might expect from a Welsh Nonconformist Liberal Member. One would expect such a gentleman to err on the side of extreme Nonconformity, but one hon. Gentleman had said that as long as Nonconformists insisted on Cowper-Temple teaching in the schools they could not resist the right of Roman Catholics and Anglicans to have their children taught their doctrines by State-paid teachers in State schools. The Prime Minister, speaking on the 1906 Bill, pointed out that Cowper-Temple teaching, however broad and tolerant, must be unacceptable to Catholics because it was Protestant, and therefore, however fundamental or primordial it might be, it still remained to the Catholic a form of Protestant instruction by a Protestant teacher. Therefore, if the right hon. Gentleman now asked that the demand that the Roman Catholic schools should form part of the national system must be accompanied by the acceptance by them of Cowper-Temple teaching as part of the teaching in the school, then the right hon. Gentleman was taking away with one hand what he gave with the other, and such a thing could not be accepted. Last night the President of the Board of Education said—

> "We believe in providing as far as we can in this Protestant country for a settlement on a Protestant basis, making an exception of and a provision for non-Protestant parents."

But the very description of the settlement debarred the Catholics from accepting it. He had heard many descriptions of the religious education policy of the Government, but none which had given him such delight as that given in the speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the Syllabus of the London County Council, in which special reference was made to what should be taught in the way of religious instruction in the Jewish schools. Nobody had a greater admiration for the Jewish people and their loyalty to their creed and race than himself. He thought there was a strong analogy between the Catholic and the Jewish case, and he contended that the oldest and the greatest Christian faith was entitled to the same toleration—he did not ask for more—as the Jewish creed. What was given to the Jews? In this education question were the most astonishing contradictions between theory and practice, between the shibboleths and catch cries of the platforms and the administration of education. This syllabus laid down the religious teaching to be given to Christian children in Christian schools. It was found to be, so far as the Jews were concerned, sectarian. The wise and tolerant men of the County Council education authority tried to see what they could do to make it non-sectarian, and the result was that although, in connection with the syllabus for religious instruction of Jewish children, no special recommendation was adopted, the syllabus for the Jews was taken entirely from the Old Testament. That meant that the school board system, nominally unsectarian, had in the East of London, schools attended by Jewish children and taught by Jewish teachers. ["Not in every case."] Christian teachers were admitted where it was a question of instruction in matters of learning and knowledge unconnected with the religious belief of the children. In some of the Catholic schools of Ireland there were Protestant teachers, as in University College, and very rightly so. It would be an intolerable thing that a man should be debarred from entering into the most sectarian school where it was purely a question of learning and knowledge. But these schools in the East End of London were in every sense of the word Jewish schools. Let the House consider the position. The Jewish school was a board school. It got a grant and rate aid. But that was not all. It got the money to build the house in which its children were taught the Jewish faith, while the Catholics all around were compelled out of their own pockets to pay for their buildings.

Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Is there any specific Jewish doctrine in the syllabus?

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: No, the doctrine was not Jewish, but that illustrated what he had just said, the extraordinary contradiction between the theoretic position and its reality, because the defence suggested by his hon. friend, whose boldness in stating a proposition was well known, was one which might have suggested itself he would not say from the casuistry of the board—namely, that in the Jewish school they taught Jewish doctrine, but it could not be described as teaching of a sectarian character, and therefore it was undenominational. He put it to any sane man in the House, who was able to look at this question broadly and fairly, whether they could not give the same liberty, under public control, to the Catholic school that they had so long given to the Jewish schools in the East End of London. He had heard with great interest the speech of the hon. Member for North-West Manchester, which had in it a little of the temper generally found in the speeches of men whose heads were in a somewhat dizzy state of exaltation after a great electoral fight. The hon. Gentleman had said that he did not want more for the Anglicans than he would give to the Catholics, and that what he demanded for the Anglican schools he was willing to give to the Catholic schools. The noble Lord the Member for Marylebone in his very able speech had said that what he wanted was equality and justice, and he was not sure whether the noble Lord did not add the word "liberty." Might he say that he saw a clear distinction in many respects between the Anglican and the Catholic demands? He accepted the proposition of the hon. Member for North-West Manchester, if he would allow him to put in some conditions. He would ask for nothing in the Bill which he was not ready to support in the case of the Anglican school where the conditions were similar. If the Anglican school was built to gather within its walls a homogeneous body of Anglican children, and practically Anglican children alone, then that case was exactly the case of the Catholic schools. But if, on the other hand, the conditions were such that the Anglican school was the only school in which the children of all denominations had to be instructed by a teacher of one denomination, then he would not fight for the Anglican school under those conditions, and he would not fight for the Catholic school under those conditions. Under the Bill of 1906, the Catholic concession was practically limited to the urban districts. That was roughly, if not mathematically, accurate, and for his present purpose sufficient. They accepted the proposition that if a Catholic school were in a single-school district, and it was the only school to which the children of other denominations could go, they had no right to demand solely Catholic management and teaching for the children of other denominations. Therefore, his answer to the hon. Member for North-West Manchester was that in order to establish similarity of claim for the Anglican school he must establish similarity of condition. So far as the single-school district was concerned, the Catholic position had always been plain, and he did not think that fact had always been sufficiently recognised by hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House. From the very first moment when this controversy arose every single man who had spoken from the Nationalist Benches had declared that in the single-school rural districts of this country the Nonconformists had a great grievance, and they would give them their support in demanding a remedy. What was the position? He did not want to interfere in the business of others, but if in the rural districts of Ireland they had only one Protestant school to which Catholic children were obliged by law to resort, and if that school was Protestant in its atmosphere and teaching, and one for proselytising Catholics, he was afraid that they would proceed to very much more active measures for getting rid of that school than passive resistance. After having fought for centuries against any attempt to proselytise the Catholic people, they would be unworthy of their history, traditions, and convictions if they tried to put on others the yoke from which they themselves had managed to escape. Therefore, he thought that the hon. Gentlemen above the gangway who had made an attempt to defend and preserve the single-school area in its present shape were doing an injustice to their own cause—that of the Anglican church—and the greater cause of religious equality. He could quote, if he had time, some striking figures produced by his hon. friend the Member for Louth, in which he showed that 300 Nonconformist children and seventy or eighty Anglican children in one single school district were wholly in the hands of the Anglican Church. To return to his objection to the principle of contracting-out. What did it mean? He regretted one passage in the otherwise very able and tolerant speech of the President of the Board of Education, and that was the passage in which he put on one side the concessions that were given to, and, on the other hand, the concessions which he thought ought to be made by, Irish Catholics. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that there was a large margin between the 40s. grant and the total cost per child in the Catholic as well as in the Church schools, and he said—

> "There is meant to be a difference. You cannot be outside the State system and have the advantage of being outside the State system without suffering some of the disadvantages."

The advantage of being deprived of more spacious schools, of better paid masters, of the most splendid equipment! He would come down from that lofty plane and consider the realities which underlay the right hon. Gentleman's statement. There was a very interesting debate in another place last night, in the course of which complaint was made with regard to the treatment of a Church school. Here was the statement made by Lord Tweedmouth—

> "It appeared that in 1901 the Board's attention was called to the absence of a playground for this school. In 1903 the Board was informed that the state of the premises was unsatisfactory. There was no cloak-room, lavatory, or water supply, and the roof was leaking."

That was the advantage that the Catholic schools had got in the past. He remembered well the poignant pain with which he used to have to go to Mr. Acland, and beg him to allow the Catholic schools in Liverpool to escape some of the demands of his Department for which they could not afford to raise the money. They had spent thousands of pounds in erecting buildings which were built for Christians and Jews at the expense of the community. His reply, in which he could never get an answer satisfactory to his conscience, was that he had asked for a lavatory or a cloak-room which was necessary for the first decencies of life. Under the system of contracting-out, they would stint not only the minds but the bodies of the children in the Catholic schools, and it was a cruel form of reparation for the wicked and foolish laws that drive these Irish men and women from their own hillsides to the slums and alleys, to make their poverty more degrading and harder to bear by putting them under a disability which was confined to them alone.

*SIR GEORGE WHITE (Norfolk, N.W.) said the hon. Member for the Scotland division of Liverpool would carry with him to a large extent the sympathy of the House in the presentation he had made of the Catholic position. That was the crux of the whole question before them. At the same time he desired to present to him the difficulties they were met with if the Catholic demands were beyond those which in justice to their own consciences they felt they were able to meet. He was sometimes in a difficulty in gathering why the demands made by Catholics in this country were so much greater than in many other countries. At the same time he admitted that their case had a distinct line of demarcation against that of the Anglican. He sympathised with the poverty of the

Catholic population and the difficulties it caused, and was prepared to go a very long way in meeting the necessities of the case; but to ask them to consent to what was practically concurrent endowment of all religions when on principle they were opposed to the endowment of any religion was asking them to go beyond what they had a right to expect. He had sometimes felt that some such solution as this ought to meet the case of the Catholic body. The hon. Member had said they were prepared to put themselves under local control. Did he include in that the appointment of the teacher by the local authority, and in other particulars were they prepared to submit to the same control in management as the other denominations submitted to?

Mr. T. P. O'CONNOR: I am quite willing to have public control under the conditions accepted by the Chief Secretary in the last form of his Education Bill of 1906.

*Sir GEORGE WHITE said that unfortunately they were not discussing that Bill, and, therefore, for the purposes of his argument he rather wanted to carry his hon. friend a little farther. But he freely admitted the great disadvantages of contracting-out. As an educationist it was impossible that he could advocate it. When he had to consider it he had to consider it as one mode of dealing with a very difficult situation, and to choose out of the various modes of dealing with it that which was the least objectionable. In regard to a national system of education under which, according to this Bill there should be secured Cowper-Temple teaching in all schools, it would be a very simple matter in urban districts to recognise the existence of Catholic schools, to suspend the regulation which provided for Cowper-Temple teaching in Catholic schools, and then take from the list of teachers on the roll those known to be Catholics and send them to Catholic schools. By that means the Catholic atmosphere would be maintained during the hours of secular teaching, and there would be no difficulty in making provision for teaching their special doctrines at such time that it would be included in the present school hours. Under some such system as that, the Catholic schools would get all the advantages of being in the national system. They would have fully qualified teachers, the buildings would be maintained by the local authority, they would save the burden upon their conscience of having anything to do with Cowper-Temple teaching in school hours, and they would also avoid laying a burden upon consciences which really could not, under any circumstances, submit to having rates levied upon them for the teaching of doctrines which they believed to be absolutely inimical to the best interests of society. He was sure his hon. friend would give those for whom he spoke credit for every desire to meet the case which he had put before them. They had in the past been foremost in fighting for that religious equality which Catholics failed to get for many generations, and he would be very sorry, not only in regard to Catholics, but in regard to any body of citizens and ratepayers, to adopt universal Cowper-Temple teaching if any considerable body regarded it as dogmatic or sectarian. As soon as that position was demonstrated he was driven into the secular position. It was not demonstrated to him at present, so far as the general body of his fellow-citizens was concerned but it was so far as his Catholic fellow-citizens were concerned. There was a distinct line of demarcation between the Protestant on the one hand, and the Catholic and the Jew on the other. If those who belonged to the Anglican Church spoke as strongly against simple Cowper-Temple teaching as those who belonged to the Catholic faith, all he could say was that they were in their wrong position. The Protestant Church was based, as he understood it, on the faith of the Bible, and the great majority of the population desired that the children of the most neglected part of the population should have some knowledge of the Bible, and that it should not be barred from the schools. If any body of his fellow Protestants said that that was an injury to their conscience, he was bound to listen to what they said, and to admit that his position was untenable. But at the same time he was equally bound to say that it was to him a strange position that a Protestant Church, supposed to be based upon the Bible, regarded simple Bible teaching as something that they could not tolerate in their schools. Lord Hugh Cecil, whose voice they sadly missed in these education discussions, because of the high tone he always gave to them, said that Bible teaching was all right as far as it went, but it did not go far enough, because it did not attach the child to a Church. That was the very reason why they were able to support it. They thought that if it did attach a child to a church it would cease to be a proper thing for the State to teach at all, because they did not believe that the State ought to occupy anything but an absolutely neutral position. One or two features which had arisen out of this discussion were a little strange. They had heard, over and over again, statements made minimising the value of local control and witnessed attempts to whittle away the significance of tests for teachers. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford said there had always been public control, and that the Act of 1902 increased it. He had never been able to see how that Act gave public control, when in vastly more than half the schools of the country the public authority had not the appointment of the teachers whose salaries they paid. Then the hon. Member for one of the Divisions of Birmingham, in regard to tests, said that if an individual employed a private teacher he had a right to inquire what were his religious opinions, and so had the community. A variety of sentiments of that kind showed that attempts were being made, after all, to depreciate the position which the Government had had to recognise. They had not yet got full public control of the education of the country, nor had they got rid of tests for teachers, or of paying out of the rates for the teaching of directly denominational religion. Therefore, it was desirable that they should understand that these were the questions with which the Government had to deal in the Bill now before the House. From what had been said he felt bound to ask who disturbed the concordat of 1870. One hon. Member that afternoon had referred to the unfortunate disturbance of the concordat, as though it had been disturbed for the first time by this Bill. As a matter of fact this Bill was mainly occasioned by the disturbance of the concordat under the Act of 1902, which made a direct departure from the Act of 1870 by putting upon the rates and taxes the whole of the expense of the schools. A great deal had been said about the voluntary schools, but surely "voluntary" was a totally erroneous name to apply to a school which was wholly maintained out of the rates. The Bill before them attempted to meet these difficulties and relieved those who had been bound ever since 1902 to make a vigorous protest against denominational teaching being put on the rates. Their position, he was afraid, was not exactly understood. The right hon. Member for Oxford said that the Nonconformists refused the Amendment for giving facilities for Nonconformist teaching in single school areas. Of course they did, and they would refuse all opportunities for giving their own teaching in State schools. That was the very principle they were fighting against, and they would not be willing to accept an Amendment which put them in the form of accepting a concurrent endowment on the same level as the denominations who desired to have this specific teaching. He was bound to vote for the Second Reading of this Bill because it contained, apart from the contracting-out clause, the essence of a good educational settlement, and he suggested that if contracting-out was not acceptable to those for whom it was inserted in the Bill they should proceed with the measure without contracting-out. Contracting-out had not been put in to please him or his friends or the hon. Members sitting right and left of him; it had been simply offered as the best means in the judgment of the Government of meeting the difficulty of the denominations concerned. There had been quoted on more than one occasion during this debate extracts from the manifesto of the National Union of Teachers. It was quite true that that Union had spoken and written very strongly against the contracting-out clauses, but hon. Members opposite did not read to the House the paragraphs which spoke very highly of the educational merits of the Bill apart from contracting-out. Therefore, when they considered that they had one type of school under this Bill, that they had all the schools under local control, a State school provided within the reach of every child, no tests for teachers, that Cowper-Temple teaching could be given if the local authority desired it, that in transferred schools the trustees could secure that Cowper-Temple teaching was guaranteed, and that there was a considerable reduction of local rates in the bargain—in those elements they had the substance of a good educational measure, and he should not, if he were a Member of the Government, thrust upon unwilling recipients anything connected with the contracting-out clauses. All the difficulties arose from the attempt made to provide for denominational teaching. They had tried to do this in what he considered was an unsatisfactory way, although it was not so unsatisfactory as was alleged, because many safeguards might be introduced which would make contracting-out less harmful. On the first evening this Bill was introduced he said to an interviewer that one of the things which must be secured was that the teachers' salaries should be equal to the salaries paid in the neighbourhood in which the special school was situated, and that the efficiency of the schools should be guaranteed. He was not there to defend contracting-out *per se.* There were so many educational defects in it that it would have to be dealt with in some way far different from what the Bill provided, and therefore he would like to see the Bill proceeded with without contracting-out at all. How were they to meet the position when contracting-out was withdrawn, and the opposition still remained as strong and possibly stronger without those clauses? The Bishop of St. Asaph's Bill had been mentioned, but that measure was not backed by any large number of the friends of the bishop who introduced it; it was just as bad as contracting-out, and it upset a system which had been going on practically for forty years under which there had been no clerical influence brought to bear either in the board or in the county council schools. It was no light thing to upset a principle which had been working so admirably all those years. Moreover that Bill was no use alone and did not offer any conditions which the Catholics could accept, and therefore they must have the principle of contracting-out accompanying this right of entry. They had had put before them in an able speech by the hon. Member for the Faversham Division some propositions from a body of gentlemen styling themselves Liberal Churchmen. Those propositions had been received by his hon. and gallant friend opposite with great cordiality, and he was bound to say that they went a long way on the lines of the Bill. They asked for "adequate provision" for denominational teaching. Of course, that was the whole crux of the proposition, and it brought them back to the same difficulty. What was deemed to be adequate provision for denominational teaching? If it meant the universal right of entry then they came back to contracting-out. He would not on this occasion trespass too much on the time of the House, but having sat through several long educational discussions in this House he thought he might fairly congratulate hon. Members upon the improved temper and tone which had been displayed throughout the discussion. That alone indicated a general disposition to reach something like a basis of agreement. Speaking, as he was clearly entitled to do, for a large body of Members of the House he wished to state that if the main principles of public control, no tests for teachers, and no payment for denominational teaching out of the rates were acknowledged as the fundamental principles of this Bill and not allowed to be tampered with, there should be no difficulty in meeting what might be a fair arrangement under suitable conditions for the needs of those who belonged to the Anglican persuasion. He hoped also that the case which had been so temperately put by the hon. Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool might also be met if the suggested conference took place. He was not in the secrets of the Treasury Bench, and he did not know whether there was any real backing to the conference, or what progress that movement had made. At any rate he thought that the discussion in the House favoured some step in that direction, and no one would hail it with greater delight than he should himself.

*SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devonshire, Honiton) said he looked with a considerable amount of surprise at the introduction of this question by the Government at a time when so many things were demanding the attention of the House By so doing they had incurred a great responsibility which could only be justified by success. He echoed the words which had just fallen from the hon. Member opposite when he expressed a desire that things might tend towards a satisfactory solution. The speeches made by the hon. Member for Dorset and the hon. Gentleman representing the Catholics of Liverpool had largely contributed to the hope of some settlement being arrived at. He confessed that the debate began very hopelessly. The speech made at the commencement of the debate by the First Lord of the Admiralty was accompanied by practically no concessions, and they could not forget the cruel and vindictive policy inaugurated by the present Government in regard to the denominational training colleges, a policy which had not yet been withdrawn or even suspended. The action of the Government upon this question reminded him of the saying: "When I speak to them of peace they prepare for battle." That was a good policy for the Admiralty to pursue, but it was not at all suited to a discussion upon the education question. The speech of the President of the Board of Education rather disappointed them. He went back to the old Bill of two years ago and denounced the action of the House of Lords in regard to it. So far as he remembered, the Government made no concession at all with regard to that Bill while it was passing through the House of Commons —no concession at least in regard to those parts which were discussed, because a very great part of the Bill was never discussed there at all. In the House of Lords the measure came before a body of experts—men who were fully acquainted with all the intricacies of the education question, and no doubt they did deal with it rather drastically. If there had been a spirit of compromise at that time, he believed a settlement might have been arrived at, but an evil spirit prevailed, and all concessions upon the Bill were refused. The spirit of the time then was very different from what it was now. The Lords were at that time under a ban, they were doomed, a new Cromwell had arisen who was about to sweep them away, or absolutely deprive them of all power. He thought things had rather altered now. If the Government had forgotten the lessons of Manchester and Mid Devon, the country had not. He spoke as one who was extremely anxious for a settlement of the education question. A large body of laymen in the Church of England were anxious for a settlement; they were weary of the present controversy He spoke for a large body of Churchmen who were most anxious to remove the grievances felt by others, but they asked that those grievances should not be relieved by the creation of the grievances to which they would be subjected if this Bill passed. Churchmen asked for no special privileges, but they asked that the sacrifices which they had made in providing school buildings throughout the country, and that the obligations resting upon them with regard to the trusts by which they were bound, should not go for nothing. They were prepared to give up a good deal for the sake of peace, and for the sake of securing that, not only in the non-provided schools, but also in the public schools, the children should get proper religious education. The question ought to be settled, because the controversy was doing harm to the cause of education, and he thought if it were protracted indefinitely the result might be the adoption of a secular system, which would be a disgrace to our common Christianity. There was a common Christianity which had been to some extent recognised in the Bill now before the House. The Christianity embodied in the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments was the foundation of the Church teaching, but it was not enough for everybody. There ought to be a means by which that teaching could be supplemented for the children of those parents who desired it.

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) congratulated the Government on their somewhat tardy conversion to sound principle. Two years ago he moved an Amendment in favour of contracting out, but the Members of the Government spoke and voted against it. Another curious thing was that hon. and right hon. Gentleman opposite who were going to vote against this Bill voted in favour of his Amendment. This Bill was essentially based on the principle of contracting-out. The Government had tried other methods, and having found that these failed, they came down to the wise principle, foolishly called contracting-out. The Leader of the Opposition two years ago spoke very cautiously; he did not profess to be an enthusiastic supporter of the principle of contracting-out, but he said that a peaceful settlement was to be found in the direction of accepting the Amendment rather than of rejecting it. He himself still believed that a settlement was to be found in the principle of contracting-out, but it must be accompanied by sufficient money to enable the voluntary schools to sustain themselves. Otherwise contracting-out was merely a device for starving the voluntary schools. He did not think that the Government meant merely to starve the voluntary schools; they now wished to save these schools though two years ago they were anxious to destroy them. The First Lord of the Admiralty recognised the enormous advantage to the country of the voluntary schools, and the cruelty which would be involved in destroying them. Assuming that it was necessary to save them, the only effective way of dealing with these schools was, while permitting them to come away from local control, to give them rate-aid as well as State-aid. He wished to call attention to the offer put forward from the Treasury Bench that the Government were willing to accept any compromise provided it did not clash with their two fundamental principles—no tests for teachers, and public control. He ventured to say that there was not a single man on the Treasury Bench who could explain what was meant by those two phrases. They were popular phrases which had passed into Parliamentary jargon and had no definite meaning. As to public control, that was already exercised in one very strict form by the Board of Education. Apparently, however, something more than this was meant, some form of local and popular control. But would the Government be prepared in a village where practically the whole population consisted of Church people to set up a Church school? If not, what was the use of talking about popular control? As to no tests for teachers, the Nonconformist party themselves did not believe in it. If a man who applied for a position in a board school said he was an atheist, would he be likely to be accepted? Of course not. The hon. Member for the Louth Division of Lincolnshire had said that it was inconceivable that a council would appoint a Protestant teacher to a Catholic school. Did not that involve a test? Councils at present deliberately put tests in force. He had a friend who was for many years a member of a school board, on which there was an arrangement between the two sections of the Nonconformist majority—Wesleyans and Baptists—that every head teachership should go alternately to a Baptist and a Wesleyan. The whole difficulty of this question arose in connection with the appointment of teachers and the matter of finance. The Act of 1902 was framed largely, almost exclusively, from the financial point of view. The Leader of the Opposition wanted to deal with what was known to be an intolerable strain. How did the strain arise? It arose because the voluntary schools had only Parliamentary aid and no rate-aid. The consequence was that the voluntary schools were unable to keep up in efficiency with the council schools. A way of dealing with this difficulty was suggested by the Liverpool School Board in 1900, namely, that the local authority should be empowered to make a grant to the voluntary schools. Unfortunately this suggestion was ignored, and instead, the local authority was made responsible in 1902 for the maintenance of the voluntary schools. This created an appearance of injustice, for it was said that while the local authorities paid the teachers the managers of the voluntary schools appointed them. It was forgotten that the owners of voluntary schools relieved the rates by providing buildings, but in order to get rid of the appearance of injustice he proposed that the voluntary schools should receive a definite grant from the rates as well as from the Exchequer, and that the managers should be responsible for the remaining expenditure.

He thought that there should be some definite principle on which the rate aid should be given. It appeared to him that the soundest principle was that the existence of a voluntary school saved the ratepayers something, and, therefore, the managers of the school had a right to some contribution from the ratepayers proportioned to the saving. From the figures worked out at Liverpool it appeared that the Catholic schools in that city were now receiving from the rates 13s. 4d. per child. On the other hand every child in a council school cost the ratepayers £1 16s. 6d., taking into account the cost of the buildings. It was therefore clearly unjust that voluntary schools should receive no rate aid, and he suggested that they should receive a definite grant per child equal to half the cost per child in a council school. The ratepayers would still gain by the existence of voluntary schools, and the managers of those schools would gain their liberty. Instead of being subject to the local control, they would be able to manage their schools in their own way, subject always to the supervision of the Board of Education. He did not propose to go back on the 1902 Act, which provided that the local authority should appoint two managers to each voluntary school. And here, he did not think that sufficient praise had been given to the Leader of the Opposition for the work he did in extending public control by that Act. Previously to that time they had one-man management; that was destroyed by the Act of 1902, which created a body of responsible managers, and it would be a bad thing to go back on that. What was the basis of the Nonconformist position as regarded rate aid being granted to voluntary schools? He confessed he could not understand the mental attitude of people who said: "We do not mind our taxes being spent upon voluntary schools, but we resist our rates being so spent." Nor could he understand the attitude of the people who said: "We do not want your particular kind of dogma taught; but we want a kind of religion taught which appears to us to have no dogma in it; and, therefore, we demand that the rates shall be spent for that kind of teaching and no other." Where was the equity in that? Suppose there were three men sitting down together to dinner, and one said he liked his food with one kind of flavour, and the second said it would be all right with another kind of flavour, and the third with no kind of flavour at all. Would it be right that the third man alone should give orders to the cook, and that the other two should pay the bill? Next, he wanted to deal with a phrase much used just now. It was that the voluntary schools did not want to come out of the "national system" or to abandon "co-ordination." It seemed to him that these phrases "national system" and "co-ordination" were worth just about as much as "tests for teachers" and "popular control." They were merely phrases and nothing else. "Co-ordination" really meant officialism; and the so-called "national system" was hampered at every turn by bureaucratic interference. The head master of a school told him the other day that he wanted some little repairs done to the furniture in his school, and he wrote about it to the local authority who sent down an inspector. The head master was not in when the inspector called, and more correspondence followed. And so it went on for a week. Finally, the head master, to save further bother, paid for the repairs out of his own pocket. That was what was meant by local control, and that was what was going on through the whole of the so-called national system. If the House wanted to know what was the advantage of so-called local control, he would point to what the London County Council had recently done. They found that they wanted more teachers, but instead of doing the obvious thing and offering larger salaries, they proceeded to invent a new scheme of giving scholarships to their pupils, and the result was that they got hold of children who were unfitted to be trained as teachers. They had never lived in an educational atmosphere, and never had any chance of obtaining a wider culture. Their whole lives were bounded by the education code. They became pupil teachers hampered by the code, then became under teachers, again subject to the accursed code, and finally they achieved the position of head teacher, school inspector, or even they might become President of the Board of Education himself—though he did not know that that would matter much. With all respect to the present holder of the office, the President of the Board of Education was merely a harmless insect on the bureaucratic wheel. The great machine over which he presided went on, regardless of his existence, grinding out £14,000,000 of the taxpayers' money, most of which was wasted. It was because he believed this so-called national system was utterly disastrous to real education that he welcomed this Bill of the Government, because it provided a means of escape. At present, no doubt, they could make this system work very well, because they were constantly bringing in men from the outside. By establishing a universal national system they destroyed that power of sympathetic management which existed wherever the voluntary school system obtained. People did not realise that the success of Germany was due not so much to the State, as to the enormous amount of volunteer effort. He was told that in the municipality in Berlin there were no fewer than 26,000 voluntary workers engaged in municipal work. It was that voluntary work which had made Germany so successful, and that was what they would destroy if they established in this country the so-called national system. Finally, he wished to make an appeal to his Nonconformist friends. The President of the Board of Education, in the brilliant speech he had delivered, said that what the Nonconformists had been clamouring for was equality. But it seemed to him that they were demanding a little more than equality. They were demanding that the system with which they alone were content should be subsidised by the ratepayers. They were demanding something more than equality; they were demanding preference. He ventured to ask them whether they thought that that change alone could take place. He knew that in the past they had suffered, but what had they done in return? They had always been foremost in the battle for liberty, but now they were claiming not only equality, but preference; and he believed that with this great change in their battle cry, the banner of freedom would pass to the other side.

Mr. Harold Cox.

Mr. ELLIS GRIFFITH (Anglesey) said that in his concluding paragraph the hon. Member for Preston had recommended suffering to everybody except himself in order that by that suffering he might hold up the banner of liberty. He thought that the argument of his hon. friend in favour of voluntaryism came to this, that, because voluntaryism was a good thing there ought to be no national system of education at all, but educational anarchy in every village. The hon. Member was always in the minority in this House, and always right. The course of the debate that afternoon, in his opinion, had been very well justified, because there had been a spirit and toleration displayed which augured well for a settlement. As he understood it, the real principle of the Bill was that there should be a normal type of school in every village. The contracting-out provision was no part of the principle of the measure. That was a concession to the other side, and it was meant to be a concession. If, however, the Opposition came to the conclusion that contracting-out did not suit their purpose, and that they could not accept it, then there was no reason why the Government should extend the principle of compromise in that direction. He maintained also that the responsibility for peace rested a great deal on the shoulders of the Leader of the Opposition—["Oh, oh,"]—to this extent, at any rate, that the House well knew, as far as the Bill of 1906 was concerned, that there might have been peace then had it not been for the fact that there was an evil spirit at work among hon. Members opposite which prevented the hopes of a settlement being arrived at then. On what terms was peace possible? They were all agreed that the best possible system of education should be established for the children of the people, and that there should be no tampering with the religious views of the people. As a Nonconformist he was prepared to go a long way in order to secure this peace; and the question was, what was each side prepared to give up in order to attain a compromise? There were but two solutions of the difficulty. Personally he did not rule out either of the solutions, and he was prepared to give up his own views in order to secure a settlement. One solution was Cowper-Templeism, with inside or outside facilities. Then there was the right of the parent. If there was anything in the suggestion of local option that would make for peace, then he was prepared for that solution. Let the parents decide what should be the normal type of religious teaching, and let special provision be made for those who stood outside. He believed that on these lines all reasonable men could arrive at a settlement, for assuredly it was no one's interest to prolong a controversy over education while in the meantime the children suffered.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The speech of the hon. and learned Member is undoubtedly the shortest speech that has been delivered in the debate, and I am aware that the hon. Member, out of courtesy to myself and the Prime Minister, has reduced his observations so as to come within the compass of less than five minutes. But the hon. and learned Gentleman contrived to say more than the three members of the Government who have already spoken on this subject. The hon. Member has shown a genuine and practical desire for conciliation, which I must honestly say I thought was totally absent from the speech of the present head of the Board of Education, and only very sporadically and intermittently apparent in the curious speech with which the debate opened of the late Minister of Education. The hon. and learned Member has really expressed his desire in the most practical form to come to some arrangement on this subject. He has given up on behalf, at all events, of himself and the other Nonconformists for whom he speaks, views about the elementary education of this country which we know they have, by long tradition and conviction, held as being very dear. I believe in the absolute sincerity of his statement, therefore, when the hon. and learned Member tells us that he is in favour of a settlement, and of peace, though that statement has not been made long enough to allow me and others to give it any practical consideration. But if every one approached the question in the spirit of the hon. and learned Member there would be much greater hopes that this debate would produce a state of happier harmony between the two sides of the House than I have felt at liberty to entertain either of the debates of 1906, of 1907, or up to the present moment in 1908. We were all led to expect when this debate began, by the tone of the Press, by communications made in the Press, by lobby rumours, by all the other sources of information open to us, that the Government would introduce a Bill—which in itself, for itself, and on its own merits has not, as far as I am aware, a friend in the House—as a kind of introduction to some sort of suggestion which would lead to a very different measure being ultimately brought forth. I never thought it a very practical project, because I cannot imagine a Bill however it was framed, which seems to me less capable of being turned into that conciliatory measure which late in the day, but none the less fortunately, has made its appearance in some of the speeches on the other side of the House. On the canvas presented by this Bill what conciliatory picture can be painted? What attempt to paint such a picture was made either by the gentleman who constructed the Bill or by the gentleman whose unhappy business it now is to defend and to carry it through the subsequent stages? As far as the author of the Bill is concerned, all he could tell us, either in defence of the Bill or in suggesting some arrangement to be made in view of the Bill, was that, after all, his measure was so undistinguishable from another measure brought in in another place by a right rev. Prelate that their own mothers would not know them apart. And yet the Minister for Education, who has got to defend the subsequent stages of the Bill, spent no small portion of his very unconciliatory speech yesterday in showing that the very plan suggested by the Bishop of St. Asaph, and repeated now, or approached now, by the hon. and learned Member, was wholly impracticable. The present Minister for Education told us that the idea of facilities was wholly impossible in practical execution, and he denounced it on behalf of himself and his colleagues.

Mr. RUNCIMAN: No, I did not.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I ask the right hon. Gentleman to look at his own speech. I may be mistaken about a particular phrase here and there, but the right hon. Gentleman devoted an important portion of his speech to explaining how impossible it was to harmonise the varieties of religious beliefs and to bring the facilities for teaching them within the compass of our system of elementary education. How the late Minister for Education can look with complacent satisfaction on a resemblance between his Bill and the Bill of the Bishop of St. Asaph—a resemblance which has never appeared to any one but himself—how his successor can explain the essential part of the Bishop's Bill, which was right of entry all round, as an impracticable plan, and how these two Ministers can agree in the Cabinet or sit on the same bench is as great a puzzle as to know how the work of the Admiralty can go on with the present Secretary of the Board and the present First Lord of the Admiralty sitting together to discuss battleships and cruisers when one has described a large fraction of the Bill of the other as something essentially disgusting. I hope they are agreed at all events on naval affairs. What is the net result of the speech made by the late Minister for Education and of the speech made by the present Minister for Education? The net result as far as we are concerned is that we have to regard the Government as coming forward with their old proposals unmodified and unchanged; and we are forced into the undisguised position of critics of a Bill which the Government declare it is their intention to pass. I do not call that conciliation. In my opinion it is almost an outrage to ask the House to assemble and to spend nearly a whole legislative week in discussing a measure that has not any element of compromise, that has not a single provision which, as far as I can see, can be converted into an element of compromise, and which is absolutely inconsistent with efficient education and with the elementary principles of justice. I am not going to repeat the arguments which have been stated with marvellous unanimity and force in every quarter of the House as to contracting-out. There is only one opinion as to contracting-out, and if contracting-out is to be part of our national system, the hon. Member for Preston has no doubt devised a scheme by which contracting-out would be less subversive of educational efficiency in every scheme of contracting-out, while being inconsistent with the doctrine of popular control. With the exception of the hon. Member for Preston I do not know where it has friends. One hon. Gentleman on the back benches opposite in a very able speech said that there were not six men in the House in favour of contracting-out. And what have the Government done in the present debate to defend it? All they have done is to come down armed with division lists and speeches made on the 1906 Bill, on the authority of which they have taunted my hon. friends behind me with having been in favour of it at that date and therefore with being very inconsistent in opposing the present proposals of the Government. Do the Ministers who use that argument forget that when Amendments are moved to a Bill and Members have to decide whether to support or reject them, all they have to consider is not whether the Amendment would form a proper basis of legislation if they were carrying it on and if they were proposing it, but whether the Amendment is an improvement of the Bill. I am certainly not prepared to deny that, if an intolerant majority forced universal Cowper-Temple teaching on the country, contracting-out, with all its faults, would be an Amendment which all of us on this side might, however reluctantly, prefer to the original proposal. If I am asked whether I prefer to be hanged or drowned, and I said that I would rather be drowned, it does not mean that I wish to be drowned as a matter of fact. If the Bill is that I am to be hanged, I move an Amendment to substitute drowning for hanging. I repudiate all responsibility on account of votes given on Amendments to the Government Bill of 1906 as binding any Gentlemen on this side to a preference for a scheme in which contracting-out forms a large and important part. I do not argue it, and I do not think it worth re-arguing because, in fact, nobody defends it. But it has this obvious disadvantage from the Government point of view—that it is totally inconsistent with any rational interpretation of their own principles of no tests for teachers and popular control. Every school which is contracted-out is, *ex hypothesi*, removed from all popular control in the sense in which that word is used by gentlemen on the other side, and in every one of them there are tests for teachers. How any hon. Gentleman who believes in those two principles can really support it when he feels that, in addition to all that can be said against it from the point of view of educationists, it is not consistent with those principles which he has been discussing on the platform and elsewhere, really surprises me beyond measure. I leave contracting-out, which has no friends, and come to that part of the Bill which I gather has friends on the other side which deliberately and *sans phrase* despoils and robs the trustees and owners of the Church schools of the country and transfers their property without compensation to the local authorities. We are told, and have been told, by speaker after speaker that this is necessary because there is a grievance in the single-school areas, and we are told in addition, that the grievance is due to the Act of 1902, and, in the third place, that it would be removed by these provisions. The last two of these propositions are absolutely unfounded. I have never denied that on paper, in many parts of the country, and in reality, in some parts of the country, there is a grievance in the single-school area; one of a series of grievances left by the anomalous constitution of our educational system, some of which press on Nonconformists, others on Churchmen and Roman Catholics. I do not deny that, and I think if I had been desirous of denying it, it has been quoted and re-quoted so often by hon. Gentlemen opposite that I should not be allowed to forget it; but there were other grievances that equally demanded and equally deserved redress. I would suggest that hon. Members should look back to the speeches with which they are apparently so familiar and give a more correct version of them. But granted there are these grievances, it is grossly unjust and historically inaccurate to say that they have any relation whatever to the Act of 1902. These difficulties, anomalies, and grievances are not an inheritance from the Unionist educational measure of 1902, but from the Liberal measure of 1870. Was the single-school area invented in 1902, or the Church school in the single-school area? No, the Act of 1902 in its object and essence was to put the secular education of the country on a sound and broad footing. It did put it on a sound and broad footing. Nobody denies it. Nobody has ever suggested any alteration in its fundamental propositions, and nobody who did suggest it would enjoy the smallest chance of obtaining a hearing from any responsible Government whatever. That was a task surely large enough for any Government to undertake within the limits of one measure. It carried with it the necessity that if we were to keep the variety of schools left by the Act of 1870 we should find funds for what were then called the voluntary schools of the country, and that carried with it the maintenance—not the creation—of a system of single-school areas. In so far as the Act of 1902 touched the question of single-school areas at all it did it to remedy grievances a generation older than the Act which the Government inherited from their Liberal predecessors. I do not blame those Liberal predecessors. The difficulties of dealing with this question were enormous, and I do not blame Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Forster for anomalies which they perforce, as practical politicians, had to accept and admit in the Act of 1870. The fact remains that in 1902 something was done to enable Nonconformists to obtain their education as teachers within the walls of the voluntary schools; one-man management was destroyed; the whole of the responsibility of secular education in all its departments was transferred to the great local authorities which that Bill created; training schools were established at the public expense at which Nonconformist teachers could be trained; and that Bill, so far from throwing a new burden on Nonconformist consciences, did a great deal, though not everything, to remove the difficulties which successive Liberal Administrations had left untouched, and which had been borne without serious discontent for more than a generation before the Act of 1902. I think it is not justice to the authors of that Act, now that the immediate storm it created has to a certain extent settled down, to accuse them of having been intolerant in the schemes they devised or of having created grievances which they found in existence, and which they did something to remove. Of course, it is true that some of the original anomalies of the Act of 1870 remained unchanged and unmodified. Among them is undoubtedly the anomaly that there is a very large number of parishes where a majority of the children educated in Church schools do not belong to the Church to which the teachers of that school do belong and to which the majority of the managers belong. I do not deny it. Of what character is that grievance? It is a parents' grievance where it exists at all; the grievance of a parent who says, "I am a Nonconformist. I should like separate teaching for my child and I cannot get it in the only school my child can attend." Do you do anything in this Bill to diminish parents' grievances in single-school areas? You do relieve them, of course, by the forcible appropriation of property that is not your own, and in some of these parishes you relieve the conscience of Nonconformist parents. Is the Nonconformist parent the only parent who deserves consideration? What is this Bill going to do where the vast majority of parents are not Nonconformists but Churchmen who desire Church teaching for their children? Are you not going to create a new single-school area grievance by this Bill? How could anybody have the courage to come forward and say, "We have existing in this country parishes in which children cannot get the religious education their parents desire," and yet the only effort to remedy that grievance creates not a different grievance, but the same grievance, with the additional bitterness and insult that it is accompanied by the forcible appropriation of buildings erected at great cost and at great sacrifices. I cannot understand how any gentleman who really thinks that there is an existing single-school area grievance can look without shame on the suggestion made to remedy it by this Bill. The blindest of us must see that while it may be right, where a majority of the children are Nonconformists, or where there is a large minority of Nonconformists, to see that they have a chance of getting the teaching they like, every argument which can be urged in favour of that policy can be urged in favour of maintaining the *status quo* in those parishes in which a different condition of things exists. I am sure there is no answer to that argument. I have heard from both sides of the House, not, indeed, an answer, but a suggestion of a view which, I think, should be emphatically repudiated by every fair-minded man. It was put forward tentatively and in very moderate language by the Member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool, who spoke of Protestants from an external point of view, and it has been put forward by hon. Gentlemen opposite from the Protestant point of view. They appear to hold that, while it is right enough for a Jew or a Roman Catholic to say that he likes this or that kind of teaching for his child, every man who calls himself a Protestant is bound, by the fact that he calls himself a Protestant, to accept the teaching of the London County Council. That really is absurd. We may regret—many of those who take a strong denominational view perhaps regret—that it has not been found possible for the Protestant sects to find some common basis of agreement with regard to the teaching of their children. But nobody is to judge of the propriety of the teaching but the parents themselves. They may be wrong in saying they want Church teaching for their children. It may show an incapacity to appreciate that common element in Christianity, a special knowledge of which is vouchsafed to the distinguished local authority to which I have just referred. But it is not for us to determine whether they are right or wrong. That is the really essential point, and the hon. Member for the Scotland Division was, perhaps, justified in his statement of the character of the differences which separate Protestants one from another, but he was mistaken when he supposed that those differences could be smoothed over necessarily by any action of any local authority, however well advised. I am speaking entirely for myself; but I am altogether in favour of doing everything that can be done—and I think more can be done than has been done—to find some common teaching which all Protestants might accept. Perhaps in that respect I do not agree with all my friends, but that is my view. But it is not a corollary to that that I set myself up as a judge as to whether the teaching which this or that parent desires is the teaching he ought to desire. All I have to ask is whether it is the teaching he does desire and if he does desire it, then, as far as practicable, though that phrase excited a strange amount of merriment yesterday, I desire to see it given. But do not let this parenthesis divert our minds from the main proposition, on which at this moment I am insisting—namely, that it is a gross outrage, not only upon justice, but also upon common sense, for the Government to bring forward a Bill to remedy the single-school area grievance, that grievance consisting only in the fact that parents cannot get the teaching they want for their children, without making the smallest effort to keep the existing system in force in those parishes where, as a matter of fact, it suits the parents. That will remain one of the strangest legislative performances which I have ever heard this or any other Government attempt to carry through. A speech like the one which was delivered by the hon. and learned Member for Anglesey makes one reflect—as I dare say we have all reflected at times—why it is so difficult to come to any agreement upon this subject. I think it is difficult mainly for three reasons. It is difficult because hon. Gentlemen opposite will not recognise that a national system of education, whatever uniformity it may possess in secular matters, cannot possibly possess uniformity in religious matters. It possesses uniformity in secular matters because in the secular matters taught in school there is little or no fundamental divergence of opinion. No parents in this country want to have their children taught that two and two is five. All are agreed as to the principles of arithmetic; they are not all agreed as to matters more important and fundamental than arithmetic—matters of religion—and it is lunacy to try to have a uniform system to deal with conditions which are essentially and fundamentally diverse. Therefore, I say, you never will settle this question unless you recognise that, whatever uniformity you may introduce in secular matters, however national you may be in the three R's, you must allow for diversity of opinion in religious matters and your system must, in these matters, be elastic. That is the first error which I think I see in the attitude of the hon. Gentlemen opposite. The other two have reference to principles which they are always talking about, but which they seldom explain and never justify. I mean the principle of popular control and the principle of no tests for teachers. The hon. Member for Preston, I think, exposed with considerable force some of the difficulties which arise in the current theories of public control. But in truth it has never been justified. No man has ever been able to point out where the distinction lies between rates and taxes. No one has ever pretended to do it, and it really is asking intelligent men to subscribe to a proposition too absurd when we are informed that it is proper that nine-tenths—I think it is more, nineteen-twentieths, I dare say—of the cost of the education of a child may be paid out of the taxes without any other control than that which is given over all to the Board of Education, and that to ask for the same amount to be paid out of the rates carries with it, as a necessity of Liberal principles, that the teacher shall be appointed, without tests, without any investigation as to his religious qualifications, by the county council, and that, when he is so appointed, in that school nothing may be taught except some form of Cowper-Temple teaching. That is not popular control, and even in the Bill of the Government itself, while they are protesting that popular control is the one principle from which they will never depart, they introduce a limitation of popular control which, however kindly meant, is really absolutely inconsistent with their own principles. They propose to rob the Church of its schools in country districts, they propose to introduce

Cowper-Temple teaching in those schools, but they do not propose to leave it to the local authority to decide what the Cowper-Temple teaching is to be. Where is popular control? I heartily support the view of the Government that the form of Cowper-Temple teaching which they propose to make obligatory is far better than the Cowper-Temple teaching which exists in many schools, but that does not disguise the fact that that teaching is introduced violently, forcibly, and in spite of what the local authority may wish it to be, and, therefore, is inconsistent with what they call local control. But, after all, the greatest absurdity of all in this strange dogma is the one to which reference has often been made in this House before, and which was very powerfully expressed, I think, by my hon. friend the Member for North-West Manchester in his most able speech yesterday, when he pointed out that you cannot call that popular control which says that you may give Cowper-Temple teaching, but may not give other teaching. That is not popular control. The late Member for North-West Manchester is now Member for a Scottish constituency. In Scotland we have popular control. In Scotland the locality, rightly or wrongly, may decide what the religion is to be that is taught in the schools; they have no limitation to Cowper-Templeism. How can any Nonconformist in this House get up, and with a serious countenance put his hand on his heart and tell us that it is an indestructible and inalienable principle of Liberalism that there should be popular control in all matters of education, including religion, while by statute you prevent the local authority from giving the religion which, perhaps, that locality most desires. And may I ask whether a similar criticism may not be passed with equal effect upon the other immutable Liberal dogma of no tests for teachers? I do not think the Prime Minister was in the House when a curious and interesting episode occurred yesterday. After the leader of the Irish Party had explained with great force the objections on the part of the Catholics, up jumps the Member for the Louth Division and expresses deep regret that the representatives of the Roman Catholics in this House will not come into a system of national education. I do not know whether a wink can be rhetorically or oratorically expressed, but, if that expressive gesture can be put into words, then the hon. Member for Louth undoubtedly winked at the learned Member for Waterford and did explain to him that, whatever you put in your Bill, however you may exclude the considerations of a man's religion from the qualifications which were to enable you to appoint him as a teacher, nevertheless, as a matter of practical fact, it would be found that, under local government as practised in this country, every teacher in a Roman Catholic would by some strange but happy accident be found to be a Roman Catholic, just as by an equally happy accident the head teachers of the schools referred to by the hon. Member for Preston always by some arrangement were either Baptists or Wesleyans or, as the late school board for London and the present county council by some happy accident and contrivance are always, without applying any tests, enabled to find Jewish teachers for Jewish schools. Does it not occur to the Government that, if that is to be the actual working of our institutions, it would be well to make some theoretical concessions? What is the use of coming down to the House and saying there are two immutable principles when you are changing the immutable principles in every Bill you bring in and by your practice in the country? We are all agreed that it is preposterous to say to a teacher: "Are you willing to sign the Thirty-Nine Articles?" but is it preposterous to find out whether a teacher can teach that which you propose to pay him for teaching? On that we really ought to have some quite explicit declaration from the Government. These immutable Liberal dogmas are much more mysterious than any dogmas of theology. They are impossible to define; they are not easy to explain; they are wholly unworkable in practice; and I do think that the Prime Minister has a chance which I hope he will take advantage of just to give us a Cowper-Templerised version of Liberal dogmas. Let us have the plain and simple teaching uncorrupted by the quarrels of the sects, and let us get exactly what he means by tests for teachers. We might agree with him—I should agree with him that there are certain questions which it is preposterous to put to teachers. If he means, as some of his friends mean, that it is unfair to the teachers and unfair to education to find out whether a teacher is qualified to give the religious teaching which you proposed that he should give—to find out, for example, whether he is qualified to teach under the London County Council syllabus in the transferred or appropriated Church schools—if he thinks that that is absurd, how does he justify either the attitude of the Member for Louth or the practice with regard to Jewish schools or the promises and suggestions which have been made from one part of the House and the other? No, Sir. It is these two unfortunate, unexplained, inexplicable, and impracticable dogmas which have stood in the way of any real arrangement. I do not believe that in substance there is any difference between the two sides of the House and the reason is that all through England you will find Nonconformists—when they not are political Nonconformists—I can assure hon. Members I mean nothing offensive by that; what I mean is that you will find Nonconformists, when they have not mixed themselves up in the public controversy on this question, working in the most perfect harmony with the parson of the parish and even with the squire. If that can be done in the country, why cannot it be done in this House? I think it can be done. I am bound to say that my hopes of its being done have been greatly diminished by two things. In the first place, by the Government's regarding this Bill as a basis on which a compromise can be erected, and, in the second place, by the speeches in defence of the Bill made by the three Ministers who have had something to do either with its construction or its defence. They have iterated and reiterated doctrines which seem to me to be wholly inconsistent with any Amendment of the Act of 1902 in the only direction in which I believe Amendment is possible—the direction, I mean, of giving further power to the parents. They have reiterated their indefensible dogmas, and, unless they are really prepared to concede that, if we abandon the historic foundation originally laid in 1870 and built upon again in 1902—if they really mean to abandon that foundation, which may be right, the only direction in which they can abandon it with any hope of safety or finality is in the direction of giving ever more and more power in religious matter to the opinions of those parents whose children they have compelled to go to their national schools.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): In a dialectical sense, tempting as are the points which the right hon. Gentleman has made for criticism and for rejoinder, I shall endeavour not to reply to him in a controversial spirit. The right hon. Gentleman told us a moment ago that, when you get outside this House into the country, at any rate out of the atmosphere of party politics, you find Nonconformists who are most eager and anxious to come to a settlement of this matter. That is perfectly true. But you find Churchmen also animated by the same spirit and aiming at the same goal, and, as the right hon. Gentleman has well said, in local educational matters both prepared to act together. We have now in the elementary schools of this country three children in the provided as compared with two in the non-provided schools. In other words, out of every five children who are being educated in this country now you may assume that the parents in a majority of three out of five are content with the Cowper-Temple teaching, which is the only kind of religious teaching allowed in the provided schools. I do not mention that except in passing, because I am satisfied I am speaking now for those within the House and not outside when I say that if we sat here in a Palace of Truth, in which we were compelled to disclose our own secret convictions, there are not a score of men among those whom I am addressing who do not feel as I feel that this controversy has now reached a stage at which, in the best interests both of the nation and, I will add, of the churches, it is our bounden duty, to seek to discover and to define not those points of difference which are obvious and familiar, but the points, if such there be, of possible agreement. In this aspect I confess I thought the early stages of this debate were somewhat disappointing. My right hon. friend the First Lord of the Admiralty made, as I thought and as I think most of us thought, a most conciliatory speech. [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh, oh!"] I think that is the judgment of a majority of the House. What was the result? For the remainder of the evening he was assailed by a succession of taunts which derided him as a Minister groping about in the dark for a policy. Then last night my right hon. friend the President of the Board of Education, in an extremely able, moderate, and reasoned speech, attempted, and I think succeeded in his attempt, to explain and defend the provisions of this Bill. What reward had he? Why the comment that was made upon his speech was this,: "Now we see this Bill from top to bottom, not only in its principles, but in all its details, is to be put forward and is put forward as the last word which the Government has to speak on the subject." That is not very encouraging to those who, like myself and like all my colleagues, are most anxious if we can to arrive at a settlement of the matter. I want, therefore, in the few moments I am going to trespass on the attention of the House, to state as fairly and as sympathetically as I can what appear to me to be the real and substantial contentions of the various parties to this controversy. First and foremost there is the Nonconformist grievance—a grievance which the right hon. Gentleman just now quite frankly admitted—I mean the grievance in the single school parishes. It is quite true that the grievance was not the creation of the Act of 1902. It was not, but it was very much aggravated by it, because the Act of 1902 for the first time quartered these schools upon the rates. The right hon. Gentlemen, I think, has never realised to what an extent the condition of things created by that Act not only exasperated the feelings but intensified the reluctance of the Nonconformist inhabitants of our villages to continue to acquiesce in the state of things which has grown up. I need not describe the state of things which exists now in thousands of parishes in England and Wales, in which, while the whole cost of the school is defrayed out of the rates and taxes, the teacher is appointed by a non-representative authority, the Nonconformist pupil has no chance in the world of attaining to the head teachership of the school, and the Nonconformist child has the alternative presented to him either of having no religious instruction at all or of having dogmatic and sectarian instruction. Whether people are reasonable or unreasonable that is the state of things, and I do not wonder that it produces a sense of injustice and exacerbation. It is a state of things which we are pledged to remedy. Is it defended on the other side of the House? I have not heard one single word said in its favour. The noble Lord the Member for Marylebone descanted with much eloquence on what is called the inalienable right of the parent, not to choose his child's religion—that is a right we all recognise—but to have the teaching of his child's religion paid for by the State. If there were such a thing—we do not admit that it does exist, but if it did exist it would have a certain air of logical reason—if there was such a thing as this inalienable right of the parent, how is it met in these single-school parishes? It is denied every day of the week. The noble Lord agrees with me. Then there is no difference between us on this point. So far we have advanced a considerable step in the settlement of the controversy. If this is a grievance, an admitted grievance, which must be remedied, where is the remedy to be found? Mind you, this is an actual and not a possible or contingent grievance, which is weighing on the daily lives of our people. How is it to be met?

There we come to the two principles which the right hon. Gentleman has made such a mock of just now, namely, the principle of rate aid, which implies full local control, and the principle that in schools supported by rate aid—and that is really the security against tests—the teacher shall be appointed not by a body of managers responsible to nobody but themselves, but by the local authority representing the parents and ratepayers of the district. The right hon. Gentleman finds it difficult even now to understand why rate aid carries with it as a necessary logical effect, the corollary of local control. But he recognised that that was the principle in 1902. What was the effect of the Act of 1902? To give to the non-provided schools, the so-called voluntary schools, for the first time rate aid. The right hon. Gentleman saw he could not do that without placing them as regards all secular instruction under the control of the local authority, and as regards their religious instruction in defiance of trusts in the hands of a board of managers, two of whom were to be representative. That is what we mean when we say rate aid involves as a corollary popular local control. You may talk about the impalpable boundary line between rates and taxes, but it is common sense, recognised by the practice of our local life and acknowledged by the right hon. Gentleman himself in his own legislation, that if you resort to a fund raised by rates by the people of the locality for local purposes they are entitled through their elected representatives to have a voice in the control of the money. It is a principle which goes to the root, not only of the system of education, but of the whole of our system of administration. Let me point out the singular misconception which the right hon. Gentleman appeared to have in this part of his speech. He said, "You who talk so loudly about local control are in this Bill in one most important respect destroying it, because you are establishing a statutory form of Cowper-Templeism which is henceforth to be compulsory on the local authority." The Bill does nothing of the kind. It says, in the case of the non-provided schools which are compulsorily transferred to the local authority, the trustees or managers may, if they please, stipulate as a condition of transfer that Cowper-Templeism levelled up to the standard of the London County Council shall be part of the ordinary religious education of the school. That does not fetter the power or the discretion of the local authority to give what form of Cowper-Temple religion it pleases in any school subject to it. No one who is cognisant with the practice of administration will dispute that there is a good deal of force in the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that in actually choosing a teacher you do not forbear altogether to ask questions—if you did, you would have a great deal of information volunteered from other sources as to the teacher's opinions—that your mind is not in a state of complete and blank ignorance as to what the teacher's opinions are. I agree. But the great security—the security which is needed for the protection of the children and for the keeping open of the avenue to promotion in the teaching profession in these single-school parishes—is that the teacher should be appointed by the local authority. That is your security, that denominational tests shall not exclude them from appointments. That is the essence of this Bill. It deals in that way with the Nonconformist grievance. We have not had one word of criticism either from the point of view of equity or common-sense on that part of our proposals.

Let me come now to the Anglican. Here I am still speaking in the main with regard to non-provided schools, particularly in rural places, a subject on which the right hon. Gentleman dilated at great but not at all excessive length. What is the position? We are dealing here not with an actual grievance, but with a grievance which the right hon. Gentleman says we shall bring into existence by this Bill—namely, the grievance that could arise or might arise if these two principles of popular control and the appointment of teachers without tests were carried out with untempered logical severity. Here, again, I think, the right hon. Gentleman did very much less than justice to our Bill. I have always recognised and said, and so have most of my colleagues, that we are the last people to belittle the enormous services which the Church of England, both by contributions of money and by the devoted labours of its ministers and teachers, has rendered to the cause of national education. It would be a perverse misreading of history not to be thankful for what the Church has done in that respect. I am anxious fully to realise and appreciate the right hon. Gentleman's point when he says the members of the Anglican community have naturally a special interest in the schools which to a large extent they have raised out of their own money, and in which they have always been accustomed to have the tenets of their own Church set forth to the children. It is true that the right hon. Gentleman does not sufficiently recognise that the equivalent voluntary contribution which in 1870 was made a condition of State assistance has long since dwindled to a mere fraction, and in many cases has disappeared. That is a fact which everyone acquainted with the history of the question knows for himself. It is true also that under this Bill we take these schools, we carry out for the trustees their purely educational trusts, we keep the schools in repair, and we hand them over on Saturday and Sunday for purely denominational purposes. All that being true, it is surely a strong exaggeration, not to say perversion of language,for the right hon. Gentleman to describe what we are doing as confiscation.

At the same time I wish to say most distinctly that, having regard to their past, the motives which inspired their foundation and for many years secured their existence, and which have throughout their history coloured and denominated their management, it would not be just, it would not be tolerable that in transferring these schools to the local authority we should not give full and even generous facilities for the continuance of special religious teaching. The right hon. Gentleman entirely ignored as though they were valueless or non-existent the provisions of the Bill for giving religious facilities. The words of the schedule provide that trustees may insist as a stipulation of transfer on an undertaking to put the schoolhouse at the disposal of the trustees for the purpose of being used by them or under their authority for giving any religious instruction consistent with the trusts affecting the schoolhouse immediately before or after any meeting of the school. We mean that as a reality. I say quite clearly, on behalf of the Government, we are ready and anxious to listen to any suggestions or criticisms that may be made for the modification of the terms and conditions under which these facilities are given which are not inconsistent with the fundamental principles of our Bill. I think we should be acting wrongly, certainly not acting on the principle which must animate us if we are to arrive at a compromise, unless we made it perfectly clear that in that respect we had an elastic and an open mind.

I come to the next class of grievances, and that is the grievances of Roman Catholics. They stand in a different category altogether. [OPPOSITION cries of "Why?"] I will tell you why. We have to acknowledge that the Roman Catholics have a special claim upon the sympathy and consideration of this House for the services which they have rendered to education in the past. They are the poorest community in this country, and while our people have contributed pounds they have had to be content to contribute pennies, and yet they have raised these schools, managed them, and conducted them in accordance with the views and traditions of their own Church by an amount of self-denying labour and sacrifice to which it is impossible to give too high praise. I say they stand in a different category. Let me say what I mean. In the first place, to Roman Catholics Cowper-Temple teaching is not merely inadequate and incomplete, as it is considered to be by a number of Members opposite above the gangway, but it is a perversion and corruption, a thing that endangers the minds and the souls of the children. I do not believe there is an Anglican of the most extreme kind sitting above the gangway who would put forth such a proposition with regard to Cowper-Templeism. That is the Roman Catholic view, and you may like it or not. Further, there is this most important differentiation between Roman Catholic and Anglican schools; the former require that not merely what is technically called religious instruction, but some branches at any rate, if not the whole, of the secular instruction shall be given by Catholic teachers in accordance with the rules prescribed by the Catholic Church. The result is that you cannot have the kind of school which satisfies the conscience and meets the requirements of the Roman Catholic portion of the community unless you have in regard to the mode and character of the teaching, in regard to discipline and punishment, and in a dozen other ways, a school which has a special and distinctive character of its own. If that is so, and I think I have stated what is a matter of common knowledge, we have done our best to devise a remedy for the Catholic grievance, and I confess I do not see how you are to dovetail schools of which these are the dominant characteristics into a national rate-aided system. The two things are inconsistent. That is the justification—I agree it requires justification—for offering contracting out for Catholic schools. I do not like contracting out. I do not know anybody in the House who does. It is resorted to because there is no other way of escape. Any school which can come into the national system on the wide and liberal terms we are offering, and which we are perfectly prepared to reconsider if it is shown that they are either narrow or illiberal, will receive support not only from the taxes but the rates. The Catholic schools retain that peculiar flavour and character which Catholics regard as essential. In their case, whatever may be said of others, some form of contracting out appeared to be a very appropriate remedy. I listened with very much care to the speech of the hon. Member for Waterford and also to the speech of the hon. Member for East Mayo, and the conclusion I draw from these speeches is that although they are reluctant to accept the machinery of contracting out, yet their objection is not so much an objection of principle, but to what I may call terms and conditions. They do not think that the provisions made by this Bill will be adequate to maintain the educational efficiency of their schools; but there again this is clearly a matter for consideration and negotiation, and the Government are quite ready to take it into account. What I am trying to show is that when we make profession of a desire for conciliation there is something more than profession, and that our ears are open to any suggestion, coming from any quarter, which will enable us to translate that profession into concrete legislation.

There is one thing I venture to say to the House with all the emphasis I can command. It is that there is one over-riding and transcendent condition we must always keep in view, and that is the maintenance by the central authority of the irreducible and always rising standard of educational efficiency. That standard applies whether the school is rate-aided or not, whether contracted out or not. That we cannot sacrifice to any religious difference or scruple. Now, what does the Bill do? In the first place, it meets the Nonconformist grievance, as everyone admits. In the second place, it attempts to mitigate, whether successfully or not, but it honestly attempts to mitigate any grievance that may hereafter arise from the compulsory transfer of non-provided schools to the local authorities in the rural districts. And, in the same way, as regards Catholic schools, it aims at providing, whether it succeeds or not, an adequate educational equipment for them and all other contracted out schools. I do not know that I have anything more to add except this. This is a most serious question which I ask the House seriously to consider. Subject to these conditions which I have outlined, is not an agreement possible? The Churches, I believe, are drawing together. They are more and more anxious, and reasonably and rightly anxious, not to go on throwing away the substance for the shadow. Educationists—those who are really interested and primarily interested in the development of our educational system—are eager for the same result, namely, that we should devote our undivided energies to the better instruction of the people. Under these conditions—near as we seem to be to an approximation in regard to many matters which two years, and even one year ago, appeared to be separated by an unbridgeable chasm—grave indeed, I submit to the House, will be the responsibility of anyone—I do not care in what quarter he sits—who from merely political reasons, the winning of an election, the manipulation of a majority, the reluctance to abandon a serviceable and captivating cry—grave will be the responsibility of any one who for reasons such as these, stands between what we believe to be the wishes of the people and the best interests of the children of this country.

The House divided :—Ayes, 370 ; Noes, 205. (Division List No. 100.)

Question put.

AYES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baker, Joseph A. (Finsbury,E.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn, SirJ.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L.(Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner,RtHn SirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Buckmaster, Stanley O.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Dalmeny, Lord
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies,M.Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Findlay, Alexander
Freeman-Thomas, Freeman
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T.(Renfrew,W.)
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Grove, Archibald
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,Rt Hn SirW.Brampton
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose
Hardy, Geroge A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holden, E. Hopkinson
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hooper, A. G.
Hope, W.Bateman(Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Langley, Batty
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Leese, Sir JosephF.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Lever,W.H.(Cheshire,Wirral)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lupton, Arnold

Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall(Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montagu, E. S.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray,Capt.Hn A C.(Kincard)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearson, Sir W. D. (Colchester)
Pearson, W.H.M. (Suffolk,Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, Col. Ivor (S'thampton
Philipps, J.Wynford(Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk,E.
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rainy, A. Rolland
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Soares, Ernest J.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn.A.Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E.
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tillett, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Ward,W. Dudley(Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J.W.(Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Ambrose, Robert
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster,Rt.Hn.Hugh O.
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt.Hn.Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,Rt Hn.A.J.(CityLond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring,Capt.Hn.G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Beach, Hn.Michael HughHicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Boland, John
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Burke, E. Haviland-
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. W.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)

Chamberlain, Rt. Hn. J. A. (Wor.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clancy, John Joseph
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, E. Feetham (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. Birmingh'm
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Capt. James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Cross, Alexander
Cullinan, J.
Delany, William
Devlin, Joseph
Dillon, John
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Donelan, Captain A.
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Ffrench, Peter
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Flynn, James Christopher
Forster, Henry William
Gardner, Ernest
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gilhooly, James
Glover, Thomas
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gordon, J.
Grayson, Albert Victor
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Halpin, J.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazleton, Richard
Healy, Timothy Michael
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hogan, Michael
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield)
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kerry, Earl of
Keswick, William
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Kimber, Sir Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Kean, John
M'Killop, W.
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meagher, Michael
Meehan, Francis E. (Leitrim, N.)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mooney, J. J.
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Muldoon, John
Murnaghan, George
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nolan, Joseph
Nugent, Sir Walter Richard
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid.
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Doherty, Philip
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Power, Patrick Joseph
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Redmond, William (Clare)
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Roche, Augustine (Cork)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, John (Lancashire)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Smith, F. E. (Liverpool, Walton)
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Stanier, Beville
Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomas, David Alfred (Merthyr
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid.)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.)
Winterton, Earl
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

Main Question put, and agreed to. Bill read a second time.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday next.—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

DURATION OF SPEECHES.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs) rose to call attention to the length of speeches delivered in this House; and to move, "That no speech by a Member, other than a member of the Government, made in the House shall exceed one half-hour in duration, except with the leave of the House granted without a negative voice, and that no speech made in Committee of the Whole House shall, subject to the same qualification, exceed a quarter of an hour; that, at the close of the said period of one half-hour or a quarter of an hour respectively, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, do take the pleasure of the House whether the Member be allowed to proceed; and that this Resolution be a Standing Order of the House."

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) rose to a point of order and submitted that the Resolution should be divided into two parts, that the first part should stop at the word "proceed" in the last line but one and that the second part "and that this Resolution be a Standing Order of the House" should be put as a separate question. The first part dealt with certain alterations which were proposed to be made and which if carried would have the effect of a sessional order. The second part dealt with an alteration of the Standing Orders of the House. He submitted that a single Resolution could not create a sessional order and at the same time alter the Standing Orders of the House.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr. EMMOTT, Oldham): In reply to the point of order which the hon. Baronet has put to me, there is a power inherent in the Chair of putting a Resolution in two parts if it should be to the convenience of the House that that should be done, and if hon. Member's would feel embarrassed by this Resolution being put as a whole the Chair can put it in two parts. So far as I am concerned, I shall put it as a whole, but I will report what the hon. Baronet has said to me to the Speaker and he will then decide what shall be done. I have no doubt if the House should so desire he will divide the Resolution into two clauses.

*MR. REES said that when the ballot favoured a young Member he had either to choose one of the stock subjects such as Macedonia, the Congo, or Tariff Reform, or to bring forward a matter of general interest not belonging to this category. But the connection between such subjects and this Motion was, nevertheless, in his opinion, of an intimate character. It often happened that subjects were dealt with on sparsely attended private Members' nights, in which foreign nations and the world outside these islands was far more interested than in the domestic Motions the consideration of which filled the House. Debates on such matters as Macedonia, the Congo, or education in India were eagerly devoured over seas, and readers abroad had no means of estimating the actual importance to be attached to individual orations of a certain class, to the harm done by which he, himself, as a frequent traveller in foreign countries could testify, for even when there did not happen to be a banquet in honour of a Prime Minister on private Members' nights, not only was the House comparatively empty, but almost all the Members who attended were committed to the views of the mover of the Motion. Thus it happened that when Macedonia was treated even as if it were Monmouthshire, and the Congo as though our connection with, and responsibliity for, that vast region, were as complete as if it were Camberwell, private Members who did not adopt this attitude, either abstained from attending, or if they came were probably unable to get a hearing. If the mover took half an hour and the seconder the same length of time, of which the House would probably not complain, there were always two or three gathered together who were, or deemed themselves to be, specialists. Then came the Front Benches and the debate was at an end. Similarly on Fridays when private Members took the legislative bit between their teeth, and bolted over the Parliamentary course, there was little chance of any Members being heard except such as adopted the views of the mover, or such as belonged to the Opposition, fortunate in the alternate call, and fortunate in one sense if not in another, in that their attenuated numbers gave their individual Members free opportunity of speech. And again, although it was well-known in England that the emptiness of the House on an Indian night, for instance, was due, not to absence of interest, but to the presence of confidence, complete and all embracing, in the Minister charged with the conduct of Indian affairs, the only organisation which actively reported the debates for the express benefit of the Indian native newspapers, made the most of hostile and critical speeches, which were subsequently disseminated all over India by a seditious Press. If the Motion he had the honour to move were administered in the letter and the spirit, there would be more numerous and shorter speeches, and the balance would to some extent be redressed. This was a matter of no small importance, and the mischief done by apparently insignificant organisations and newspapers, was unfortunately little appreciated in the United Kingdom. It was believed that the adoption of this Motion would to some extent mitigate this mischief, would be an advantage to the course of business in that House, and would promote the efficiency of its proceedings. It was, however, if he might speak for himself, far from being his intention to give further facilities for the making of more laws—for he never forgot the maxim of Tacitus, *corruptissima republica plurimæ leges*, and would only provide that more Members of the House might be able to participate in the debates upon such measures as must come before it, that the voices of the constituencies might be more freely expressed, that the necessity might be obviated for autumn sessions, and for late summer sittings, for over-working and clogging the wheels of public offices, and so impairing the efficiency of the administration, upon which, far more than upon legislation, depended the happiness of all those affected by the multifarious activities of Government. Moreover, he could not help thinking that the Government of the day, to whatever party it belonged, was to some extent influenced by the one-sided character of the long speech debates, in which dissentient voices had little chance of being heard, when vague, altruistic aspirations, clothed as to their externals in more or less legal form, were put forward as Bills, deserving at any rate, it was pleaded, of a Second Reading, amorphous masses which might be licked into shape upstairs, It might be urged, however, that it was highly undesirable that a Second Reading should be lightly accorded to half debated and undisgested proposals, which ever afterwards could boast of having been approved by Parliament. Nevertheless, Motions on Wednesdays and Bills on Fridays, whether or not on account of previous conference with Ministers or Whips, he could not say, not infrequently met with the support of the Front Bench. In many cases this was of a somewhat platonic character, and there was every reason to believe that large numbers of private members who voted for such Motions and Bills, did so with no intention, and indeed no desire, of making them effectual, or of making them law. If the length of speeches were restricted, it might fairly be expected that other Members would come forward and express their dissent from what appeared under existing circumstances to be, what in fact it seldom or ever was, the almost unanimous feeling of the House. Indeed it was more than probable that on many occasions the majority in the House and the country did not concur in these apparently almost unanimous conclusions, which depended so largely for their success upon the paucity of Members in the House, the difficulty the non-contents upon the benches had in getting in a word athwart the prevailing current, and the discouragement and dissuasion with which such dissenting Members were met by others present, who were almost to a man sworn supporters of the private Motion, or the private Bill, for the moment under consideration. Indeed it required some little temerity even to bring forward a Motion other than such as met with the approval of the active groups above described, and there was no guarantee that without their help a House could be made, for they included a large proportion of the Members, who were most regular in their attendance, no matter what was the business before the House. Yet there were, outside these groups, amongst the Members, many, who though young Parliamentarians, might be by no means immature or inexperienced, whose speeches, if becomingly brief, might for special reasons possess a certain value on particular occasions. An instance occurred in the Motion brought forward in 1906 censuring Lord Milner for some untoward and unimportant occurrence for which he was technically responsible, and for which, following the traditions of his class, he accepted the fullest responsibility. Every Member who had served under, or with, the Governors of our Colonies and foreign possessions must have earnestly desired to appeal to the hon. Member for Salford to withdraw his motion, but in point of fact, the debate was confined, including the mover and seconder, to six Members, of whom three sat on the Front Benches, and actually only one private Member spoke for five minutes, besides the mover and seconder, each of whom had not more than a quarter-of-an-hour. Upon the Foreign Office Estimates again in 1906, there were only eleven speeches, one of which, by a private Member, occupied about seventy-five minutes, while four others took each more than three-quarters of an hour. Yet this was the chief, if not the sole, occasion which offered to the House of discussing the many and great subjects with which the world wide activity of our Foreign Office was concerned. It had been laid down by his hon., eloquent, and independent friend, the Member for Preston, that the House of Commons was never so wrong as when it was unanimous, and this might well be the case when the House was, so to speak, packed, as it was on private Members' days, and would continue to be unless Members of different complexions found they could participate more freely in the debates. It was usual in the lobby to hear a conversation of this kind regarding an approaching private Motion. "Who is likely to speak besides the mover and seconder?" "Mr. Blank and Mr. Asterisk." "Well, they always want so long each, and then there is the Front Bench, and there is no chance of getting in. I shall go home." Yet the homing Member, had he been called, might have spoken with the voice of the House, or with the voice of the country, and not from the standpoint of a party, a group, or a philanthropic association. It was more particularly on private Member's days and nights that there was a necessity for some curb upon eloquence. Such, however, would probably be admitted to be required even on other occasions. As an example which would serve for the moment, might be taken the Second Reading debate on the Licensing Bill, a subject of the first importance, which might, indeed, be said to divide the country into two hostile camps. On this occasion thirty-five speeches were delivered, occupying twenty-four and a quarter hours, giving an average of over forty-two minutes to each speech, and of the speeches delivered, one occupied an hour and three-quarters, one an hour and a half, five one hour and a quarter, and six one hour. Five speakers took three-quarters of an hour, and ten half an hour, each, and but for the moderation of seven speakers who contented themselves with a quarter of an hour, the average would have been far higher, while upwards of fifty Members who were most anxious to be heard, never had an opportunity of getting in at all. Yet on such an occasion, indeed upon most occasions, it was desirable as far as possible that each individual Member should give expression to the views of his own constituency. How many subjects too, there were which might be brought forward with advantage if only a little of the time so freely granted to the captains general of the Chinoleptic contingent, and the promoters and supporters of other popular causes, were available for the rank and file of the private Members. How frequently a debate ended without the enjoyment of a speech such as the House was accustomed to welcome from the hon. Member for South-East Durham, who illustrated in his life and conversation the Horatian maxim: *Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat?* Who could tell whether upon the back Benches might not languish, unheard, and unappreciated, Members young in years and in Parliamentary experience, who in the fullness of time and with favouring circumstances might approach as nearly as might be, to the consummate art of the Prime Minister, who could in a comparatively short speech make the finances of a mighty Empire crystal clear to an ordinary intelligence? Opportunity for speech together with insistence upon compression would give budding statesmen a chance, which now was, in ordinary circumstances, lacking. He could not help thinking, too, what advantages might result from the introduction of more voices into the debates in order that certain established positions, usually taken for granted on certain occasions, should be assailed. It might, indeed, be contested that humanity was exclusively a British attribute, that it could only be preserved by continuous residence in Britain, that it was endangered by wider experience and extended travel, that it was altogether lost when the Briton became a British agent and administrator abroad, that a representative Government was the only form of rule worthy of adoption all over the world, that all things in all countries should be measured by British standards, and that Colonial and Indian administrators were *ex officio* oppressors of subject races. At the least the objectors to such comprehensive conclusions should be heard. It now happened not infrequently that Members who had passed their lives in the study of, and in actual acquaintance with, certain subjects were unable to speak when such came up for discussion. He himself had sat out a whole Indian debate with that result, which, he confessed, moved him to the one reprisal, which ill became the mover of this Motion, and to a speech which exceeded half an hour in duration. For this he repented in Parliamentary sackcloth and ashes, and he might at any rate plead that when an occasion offered for a glorious repentance he took it, and now sought to deprive others as well as himself of that opportunity to do ill deeds which conduced to make ill deeds done. Moreover, it was hardly to be expected that if some Members indulged in long speeches, others would not, in kind, retaliate. Again, if certain Members knew, or had a reasonable expectation, that they would be called, they could indulge in a little much needed preparation, which under existing circumstances would probably be labour lost. Without preparation, brevity was apt to become obscurity *brevis esse laboro obscurus fio.* With the adoption of this Motion there would be a chance after many centuries for the acceptance of the advice of the wise old Greek poet who said—

> "How much the half is better than the whole,"

and it would be the aim and object of every orator to put his best into the half which he was able to present to the House. With the time-limit staring him in the face, an hon. Member would, moreover, escape from the painful position in which he too often laboured heavily over his penultimate peroration, and seemed, despite desperate efforts, unable to grasp the fleeting phantom of the last word. It might be argued that this Motion was not sufficiently drastic, but anything of a severer character would have no chance of acceptance. It was offered as a first step, and if accepted as a Standing Order, would come under periodical revision. The late Mr. Talbot, of Margam, who in his day, was the Father of the House, arrived at the conclusion, which he strongly held, that the time-limit for speeches should be half an hour. Had this Motion been drawn for ten minutes, or even twenty, and for half that period in Committee, it would have worn a more heroic aspect, but it would have had less chance of being carried. It was obviously necessary to exempt from the operation of the Motion Members of the Government, chiefly upon public grounds, also, and in a less degree, as a bribe in the hope that their support might be secured. It might, of course, be fairly argued that a similar length of time should be allowed to the Opposition, but it might also be taken for granted that the House in whose hands the working of the rule would be, would concede to an ex-Cabinet Minister all the time which, as a matter of right, would belong to a Member of the Government. On the other hand, the value of the rule might be impaired if an exception were made in favour of all junior members of past administrations, any one of whom might desire at any time to deliver one of those exhaustive and exhausting orations which it was the object of this Motion to check. The rule as drafted, would lay down half an hour as the limit for speeches under ordinary circumstances, and it was believed that this principle once established, half that time would soon come to be regarded as the proper length for a private Member's speech. It would be impossible to make an exception in favour of experts, whose great name was often usurped by travellers who had enjoyed a delirious three weeks "*in partibus*" in which they might well have absorbed the maximum of error and interested misrepresentation. Not indeed that there was no balm in Gilead, for if "the words of the wise are as goads and as nails fastened by masters of assemblies," the expert whose advocacy was fatal to the cause he espoused was of no less service in his day and generation, and his every word was a nail in the coffin of the cause he essayed to support. It would not, however, be desirable on this account to give him more law, and no Standing

Committee or other tribunal had yet been set up, charged with the delicate duty of preparing a list of true and trustworthy experts. It was now nearly sixty years since Mr. Milner Gibson introduced a Resolution into the House of Commons, that the speeches of Members should be limited in duration to one hour, the introducers of original Motions and Ministers of the Crown being exempted from the rule. It was upwards of a decade since the hon. Baronet the Member for Chelmsford carried a Resolution that the duration of speeches in this House had increased, was increasing, and should be abated, and it was seven years since Sir Joseph Dimsdale, then Member for the City, moved that no Member should, except by leave, speak for more than twenty minutes, or twice on an Amendment in Supply, Ministers, ex-Ministers and Movers of Bills excepted. The success of the hon. Member for Chelmsford, his Motion not being moved as a Standing Order of the House, was unavailing, and the Motion of Sir Joseph Dimsdale was negatived on a division. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition had on a previous occasion expressed his readiness to support a Motion somewhat similar to the one now before the House, if it related only to private Members' nights, and he said that the time would come when the House must adopt a time-limit. He understood the last remark to be of general application, and surely that time had now arrived, and the time-limit might be applied not only to licences for public drinking, but to licences for Parliamentary speaking. Nor could it be regarded as other than a most propitious circumstance that the present Leader of the House, as often as he spoke, offered a model of concise and compressed eloquence. It was believed that in all our Colonies a time-limit existed, and also in certain foreign legislative bodies, though he regretted he had been unable to obtain such accurate information as would justify him in laying it before the House. In the House of Representatives of the United States, the rules of debate provided that no Member should, with certain specific exceptions, occupy more than one hour on any question in the House, or in Committee, that when general debate was closed by order of the House, a Member might be allowed five minutes in which to explain any Amendment he might offer, and any one other Member five minutes in which to oppose, and that on a Motion to suspend the rules, debate might extend to forty minutes, one half in support and one half in opposition to the proposition. In Italy deputies were at liberty to read their speeches, so long as the reading did not exceed a quarter of an hour. This rule, however, was hardly analogous to British practice, or to his Motion, for hon. Members did not here, as they did in the only other legislative assembly in which he had sat, read their speeches. The reason given, whether seriously or not, he did not know, for the practice which prevailed in the Legislative Council of India was, that if an eloquent Bengali once got on his legs, he would never be likely to sit down. Or possibly a feeling prevailed that when an hon. Member represented, as he did himself, for four years, a population almost as numerous as that of the United Kingdom, he was, with a burden like that of Atlas on his shoulders, at least entitled to a seat. In the London County Council no speech might exceed fifteen minutes, without the consent of the Council, while the mover that the consideration of a question be postponed, or that the debate be adjourned, might not speak for more than five minutes, the same rule as to time applying to Motions that the Council do adjourn. To sum up his case; under existing circumstances in the House of Commons the individual voice of a constituency could not as a rule be heard, unless it happened to be represented by a Minister. In the recent debate upon Lord Ashtown's case, Mr. Speaker stated to the House that he had no power to stop a Member who was speaking at such length as to give rise to considerable impatience in a certain quarter in the House. Under this Motion, such power would be given to the House itself. Some such rule was absolutely necessary, for in this country they could not, and indeed did not wish to, look forward to the day when the people would break into Parliament, cut off the head of a Member who would not stop speaking, and present it on a stick to Mr. Speaker, as happened with the French Convention in 1796. It was indeed once suggested long before the women's suffrage movement, and the evolution of Miss Maloney and her bell, that exuberance of Parliamentary verbosity should be checked by the Clerk Assistant ringing a bell in the House. Neither the chopper nor the bell, however, were likely to be brought into requisition. Yet the time had arrived for dealing, in that slaughterous sense, which the late Lord Salisbury said was inherent in the word, with Parliamentary verbosity. In the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," an Ancient declared that he had not inflicted long lectures upon his hearers, and the loyalist, Hugh Grove, who was executed in 1665, pleaded in his last moments that he was never guilty of much rhetoric, or ever loved long speeches. In their last moments they thought of the greatest crimes that could be laid to their door, and protested their innocence. In order that Members of Parliament might have the like comfort in their last hours, and to the end that they might be heard in moderation in their lives, he ventured, with sincere thanks to the House for the indulgence with which it had listened to him, to move the Motion which stood in his name.

SIR CARNE RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford) seconded the Resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That no Speech by a Member, other than a member of the Government, made in the House shall exceed one half-hour in duration, except with the leave of the House granted without a negative voice, and that no speech made in Committee of the Whole House shall, subject to the same qualification, exceed a quarter of an hour; that, at the close of the said period of one half-hour or a quarter of an hour respectively, Mr. Speaker or the Chairman, as the case may be, do take the pleasure of the House whether the Member be allowed to proceed; and that this Resolution be a Standing Order of the House."—(*Mr. Rees.*)

*MR. MALLET (Plymouth) said that his hon. friend had introduced this Motion in a speech which nobody had found too long. He took it that in urging the adoption of a time-limit for speeches they were all thinking of others rather than of themselves. He wished to support this proposal, not because he thought a thirty minutes time-limit in every case was an ideal thing, and not because he endorsed the proposal to allow to Ministers only a licence in speaking which might easily become a freehold in long-windedness, but because he thought some kind of time-limit was needed, and was anxious to test the feeling of the House on this point. He thought they were all agreed that there was too much repetition and waste of time in debate. This House had few rhetoricians and no bores, but many of them were tempted to speak longer than they should do, and to frame a rule which would check redundancy and repetition, whilst allowing the great speakers ample freedom, would be a real advantage to debate. His hon. friend had mentioned a Resolution proposed by Mr. Milner Gibson sixty years ago. In 1833 a Motion was proposed by Mr. Buckingham advocating twenty minutes speeches for Members on the ground that it would afford all Members an "equal opportunity" of joining in debate. What a mockery that sounded to those who knew the practice of the House. Some Members had had to wait eleven months, eighteen months, and even two years before they were called upon to make their maiden speech. Many of them anxious to speak had sat through a full-dress debate only to see their best points stolen and their arguments mangled by speakers luckier than themselves, and finally had returned home disconsolate, to vent their undelivered speeches in letters to the Press. Unless they adopted some kind of time-limit they could never hope to give an equal opportunity to the many able speakers in the House of Commons. Sometimes they were reminded that speeches were now a great deal shorter than they used to be. They all knew the story of the Begums speech of Sheridan which lasted for five hours and forty minutes. In the old days Burke, Pitt, and Fox, all maintained the tradition of long speeches. Mr. Pitt owed no small part of his supreme hold on the House of Commons to his majestic lengthiness of speech, and there probably never was a man of character and genius so uncommon, who left behind him a greater mass of noble-sounding commonplace. But these great men were not examples to be followed now in the matter of long speeches. In the old days there was no necessity for a time-limit because hurry and condensation were unknown, and all talk was apt to be long-winded, because to be long-winded was to be polite. He submitted that we had left these leisurely methods of the past behind, and that to ask the House now to keep up the tradition of unlimited speeches was surely an unreasonable thing. We had got to the days of motor-cars and telephones, to the days when newspapers had no time to wait for news, and therefore manufactured it themselves, when our great novelists devoted themselves to the writing of short stories, when our greatest poet, Mr. Kipling, wrote sometimes in curt, inspiring slang, when conversation was almost a collection of clippings, men of fashion not having the time to finish the words they had begun; and in such days it was an anomaly that the House should still cling to unrestricted speeches when it had turned its back on all the leisurely traditions of the past. He did not like the distinction which his hon. friend had made between Ministers and ordinary Members. There were obviously private Members of the House who ought to have as full an opportunity of speaking at length as any Minister. He would like to begin on a smaller scale than the hon. Member proposed, and to limit the length of speeches on private Members' Bills or Motions, and on the Committee stage, the Report stage, and the Third Reading of all Bills alike. In the case of the First and Second Readings of Government measures he would give every man his fling. It was a difficult matter, but if they could arrive at a well-conceived arrangement for limiting speeches, he believed the speeches would not only be diminished in length, but strengthened in quality too.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) said he was inclined to agree with the mover of the Resolution on the intrinsic merits of the case. There was no one in the House who was not entirely opposed to long speeches, but he thought he was right in saying that the Resolution went much further than they desired. Speeches now were as a whole shorter than in times past, and consequently there was no need for the Resolution. He assured the House that in opposing the Resolution he had no desire to infringe its spirit. This Resolution had been brought before the House periodically.

*MR. REES: It is not the same Resolution.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH said that if it was not the same Resolution, it was in the same spirit as previous Resolutions. He ventured to think that there was not much interest in the question at the present moment. He sincerely hoped that the excellent speech of the mover would have the desired effect in preventing hon. Members from indulging in undue loquacity. His reason for opposing the Resolution was that he resented the restriction of discussion in any form. Hon. Members had every right to bring forward and discuss anything in which they were interested. It was for that reason that he took every opportunity of resenting the operation of the closure; and he sincerely hoped that on whatever side of the House he might sit he would always oppose anything in the nature of the closure. They knew that the closure was entirely contrary to the idea of Parliament and was as yet entirely unknown in the electorate. The general trend by the action of the closure was to establish in this House an all-powerful oligarchy in the shape of the Government, or what was worse, but not the less possible, an omnipotent autocrat in the shape of the Prime Minister. What was wanted was free discussion, and the good feeling which attended free discussion. If this Resolution was assented to it would be the foundation of a system far more drastic in its character than the present; and he could see a time coming when Members of the Government would be allowed to put forward their propositions while all other Members of the House would only be permitted to say "Aye," or "No." It had not been his privilege long to be a Member of the House, and he had some diffidence in putting forward his views; but he was convinced that the proposal of the hon. Gentleman was very dangerous, and the more dangerous from its insidious and attractive character. A majority of the House might be inclined to vote in favour of curtailing discussion when they had been tired by long and uninteresting speeches, or were seduced by other attractions in the House with which they might regale themselves when their fellow-members were too tedious to listen to. Again, if the freedom of discussion were refused to advanced and Labour Members they might see orators traversing the country from one end to the other, advocating a social upheaval. Instead of that, they saw these hon. Gentlemen quietly sitting in this House and they could not but look upon them as anything but harmless volcanoes. In this country we were free from what other countries suffered, viz., the terrible curse of anarchy, and that was because there was here the privilege of free speech. It could not be denied that that freedom of speech acted as a safety valve for placing in the light of public opinion those views which only became dangerous by reason of their suppression, and which, if harmful and consequently contrary to public opinion, evaporated in steam instead of sowing the seeds of anarchy and revolution. Moreover, to his mind, the Resolution was in no sense necessary. The whole trend was for speeches in the House to become shorter, and it could not be said that the speeches in the present House of Commons were to be condemned for undue length. Reference had been made to Mr. Biggar, who had spoken for six hours, and there was a record of a voluble Member of the Jamaica Senate who spoke for twenty-four hours and threatened to speak for another twenty-four if the resolution he was opposing was not withdrawn. There was no danger of speeches of that kind now. It should be left to the judgment of the House to make the necessary curtailment of speeches they did not desire to hear. Very closely allied to the question of long speeches was that of obstruction. They all deplored obstruction, although every single Member of the House at some time or the other welcomed the effect of obstruction. He was certain that it was due to the action of the closure that obstruction existed, although it did not obtain to the same extent as before. He sincerely hoped that this Motion, even as an expression of opinion, would not pass.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.) said he agreed with the noble Lord that any restriction on fair and free discussion was undesirable, but he had been long enough in the House to regard with some equanimity the effect of what the noble Lord called restrictive measures. He could speak with some detachment on this subject, because he had always only spoken under compulsion, and he doubted if there was any Member in the House of Commons who had as good a record as he had. He did not think that the speeches he had made since he became a Member would work out as occupying more than an average of one hour per annum. Therefore, he could look upon this question without prejudice. He could respond to the appeal of his hon. friend the Member for Montgomery Boroughs, and treat his Resolution in no unfriendly spirit. He agreed that a change in the direction aimed at by the Resolution would probably be salutary, but as proposed it was certainly sudden. He was not quite sure that the House understood the position or the effect of the Resolution if carried. Supposing the Resolution was taken in two parts, and was carried down to the word "proceed," he understood on very high authority that in effect it would become, not a Standing Order, but a Sessional Order, and it would become operative to-morrow. In these circumstances it was very necessary to see where they were going. He would call the attention of the House to the fact that though there might be something like general agreement in favour of the Resolution its supporters were not altogether agreed as to its terms; and before they adopted a Resolution which might become operative to-morrow, they should consider what form it was to take and in what manner it could be carried out for the regulation of their debates. He agreed that it was most desirable, not only to save time by curtailing speeches which were unnecessarily long, but also to secure a more fair distribution of the available time of the House, especially to those Members who desired to speak, and were well entitled to speak, but whose qualities did not make them so persistent as others in endeavouring to catch the Speaker's eye. In that respect, a change was desirable. But he was not at all sure that the resolution, as it was drawn, would have the effect of shortening the duration of speeches, and giving fuller opportunities to others. His hon. friend had made a very interesting analysis of the debate on the Licensing Bill. Certainly some of the speeches might have been curtailed, but the average was certainly longer than the average speeches in other debates in this House. If they adopted for general purposes of debate a limit of half an hour it might be an inducement to Members to speak up to that limit. He would undertake to say that the average duration of a speech in Committee was nothing like a quarter of an hour. The effect of this resolution might be to cut down a speech that was necessary and encourage others to speak up to the limit, and thus lengthen the proceedings in Committee. But he must point out that the promoters of the Resolution were not at all in agreement upon its terms. For example, he would deal with the proposed exclusion of Members of the Government from the operation of this Resolution. Members of the Government were often the worst offenders. He did not blame them altogether, because, though it was not at all difficult to make a speech lasting a long time, it was difficult to compress a great deal of important matter into a short compass. Very often the length of the speeches of a Member of the Government was due to want of time for the preparation of them. But he could not see how it could be said that there should be no limitation whatever on any speech of a Member of the Government whilst every other Member of the House was to be limited to a quarter of an hour. He did not think that that was a proposal that would commend itself to the House. But that again was a matter for consideration. If the Amendment on the Paper had been moved he would have had to criticise that as he now had to criticise the Resolution of the hon. Member, because it was not possible to impose a fixed and arbitrary limit on Ministers' speeches. The Prime Minister was a master of language, who could compress to an extraordinary extent matter and argument into a small space, but even he delivered a speech on the Licensing Bill which lasted one and a half hours, and shortly afterwards a speech on the Budget which lasted two hours, and no hon. Member would suggest that either of those speeches could have been curtailed. These observations had reference to the Amendment on the Paper which would of course have to be carefully considered before this Resolution could become either a Sessional or a Standing Order of the House. Another point was, how was it proposed to establish a time-limit? In other countries he knew they had mechanical arrangements to show when the time-limit was reached, but how was Mr. Speaker to judge the exact time? Was he to observe the clock? He himself remembered in his own experience the clock stopping. All these might be treated as very small points, but it was the small points of procedure that had to be carefully considered and thought out. Before the House adopted a Motion of this sort it was necessary to consider these matters so as to get in a concrete form what it was proposed to adopt. It therefore seemed to him that full consideration must be given to these questions. It was clear that hon. Members had no idea of what the exact effect of this Resolution would be if carried even without the last sentence. It would become a Sessional Order and would come into operation immediately. It was only when this matter was inquired into carefully that they discovered that they were on the eve of passing a new Sessional Order which, whether good or bad, was a very great change in the procedure. He therefore proposed that the hon. Member should be satisfied with the appointment of a Select Committee to consider this particular question. The Government could not accept the Resolution as it stood, and if the hon. Gentleman accepted his proposal no time would be lost, because essential and speedy consideration would be given by the Select Committee.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) thought the right hon. Gentleman had given some very useful information to the House but that he had not taken the strongest line that might have been taken in opposing this Resolution by a man occupying his position. It was open to the right hon. Gentleman to remind the House of two things: first, that this was a matter of procedure, and that procedure was a matter which the Government ought to keep in their own hands; that there were even now several proposals of the Government with regard to procedure which had not been considered by the House, and that this particular Resolution was not included in them. That was the first part of the answer the right hon. Gentleman should have given, because such a revolutionary proposal as this ought not to be proposed except by a responsible body in the House. The second answer should have been that this House had been for some years working out an experimental system on lines totally different from those of the Motion; namely, to limit the length of the debates as a whole. When he was a Member of the majority in the House he sometimes took the view that the debates ought to proceed upon the line of trying to get the minority as well as the majority to adopt some sort of co-operation similar to that which was seen in the majorities of the House. It always appeared to him that when a time-limit for a debate was imposed a body of persons interested in securing the best use of the time allowed should be created, and the most important of the matters under discussion debated. If a time-limit in speeches was imposed they would fail entirely to secure that co-operation to which he referred. He thought that the House would be very ill-advised to accept this Motion at a stage when they had an uncompleted scheme of reform in the hands of the Government itself which would develop on totally different lines, and that the Government should not abandon their experiments in favour of this experiment of quite a different character. He did not wish to see the House brought to the level of a diocesan conference, and he hoped therefore they would not do more than limit the proposal in the first instance to discussion upon private Bills. He thought the distinction between members of the Government and unofficial Members of the House was hardly tenable or defensible, and still less the distinction between the proceedings in Committee and the whole House. He had to remind the mover of the Resolution that he had entirely forgotten that the Budget speech had to be delivered in Committee of the Whole House. If he failed to maintain his distinction between private Members and members of the Government, his Motion would strike at the Budget speech itself. He considered it was a difference which was extremely likely to be rejected if put to the test of the House. He thought, therefore, they ought not to adopt the Resolution except in the most tentative and experimental form, and he should vote against it, believing the House was better employed in making experiments on a totally different line.

*MR. THEODORE TAYLOR (Lancashire, Radcliffe) said he had been an enthusiastic supporter of the hon. Member for Essex, who in modern times had been the father of this movement. The noble Lord the Member for Maidstone had deprecated the stifling of discussion. He (Mr. Taylor) was in favour of the Resolution, but he did not want to stifle discussion. He thought there was a way of stifling discussion by letting a small number of men occupy a great amount of time. He was one of those who believed in short speeches, and if he wanted to give any of his friends an idea of what the House of Commons was like he told them that it was like a series of long sermons, to which they could listen or not as they pleased. Fortunately, there were places where hon. Members could take refuge from speeches they did not want to hear. He knew it was impossible to please everybody and he often sympathised with the Speaker and the Deputy-Speaker who had to choose those who were to conduct the debate. It must be extremely difficult in the case of measures like the Education and Licensing Bills. There were a good many of them who liked to give as many ideas as they could in as few words as possible, but they were obliged to hear a number of other hon. Members who spread as few ideas over as many words as possible. He did not think there was any other body in the country—certainly not the great trade unions—who would stand this. He agreed that any time-limit would not necessarily be a cure for a fault they saw in others, but not always in themselves No doubt they were all impatient at the length of other people's speeches, especially when they wanted to put in a few words themselves. He recognised that a time-limit was not necessarily a cure, but he thought it would be something towards a cure. He did not believe hon. Members would talk up to the time-limit. The noble Lord had said that obstruction was due to the closure; no, the closure was due to the fact that there was obstruction.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH: I did not say obstruction was due to the closure. I said it was accentuated by the closure.

*MR. THEODORE TAYLOR said he did not agree with the noble Lord. There had been no more obstruction since the closure than there was before. Replying to the hon. Member for Plymouth, he wished they had more "dull" men in the House who would say what they wanted to say in a few words. It was phrase-cleverness and culture which often caused obstruction. There was too much artificial talk and persiflage in the House. Parliament should be a business assembly. The House would tolerate eloquence when it was the outcome of strong feeling, but it did not care two pins about set speeches. The Prime Minister had been mentioned. To his thinking the right hon.Gentleman's speeches were models of conciseness and lucidity. He wished every Member of the House of Commons said as much per minute or per five minutes in his speeches as the Prime Minister; there would then be no complaint of long speeches. What did they say about sermons? He had always said that he did not want to hear any sermons which were longer than half an hour. They told the parsons that if they could not say all they wanted to say in twenty minutes they did not want to hear any more. Let them apply the same rule to themselves. Of course, no Motion of this kind would strike at a Budget speech, and he also thought the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer should have a little more time than most Members. Although he agreed thoroughly with the purpose of the Resolution, he was sure the mover would be well advised to accept the offer of the Government to appoint a Committee to consider this question, and he hoped he would withdraw his Motion in favour of that offer.

*MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) said the noble Lord the Member for Maidstone had reminded the House of the achievement of Mr. Biggar, who once spoke for four hours, and the hon. Member for Plymouth had instanced the case of Mr. Burke, who once talked for five and a half hours, but he had no intention of emulating the example of his distinguished countrymen. He would like to point out, however, that obstruction was not produced by long speeches. Let them ask the hon. Member for the City of London, who was an expert in the art, whether long speeches were conducive to obstruction. Anybody who had studied the science of obstruction knew that it was to make short speeches frequently, and move as many Amendments as possible. He felt sure the hon. Member for the City of London, if he would make a confession, would agree with him. The Home Secretary had said that it was easy for anybody to make a long speech, but it was not always easy to make a short speech. He was inclined to agree with him. He recalled the apology of a clergyman for a long sermon, that he had not time to prepare a short one. As a matter of fact, that was the explanation which might be offered for a good many of the long speeches delivered in the House; at least they might charitably hope so. He could not support the Motion unless the hon. Member could see his way to add to it a most important proviso, something like this, "And further that no Member shall be allowed to make more than ten speeches in any one session." The hon.

Member who moved the Resolution confessed to having once occupied the attention of the House for half an hour on the Indian Budget. He thought he was nearer an hour. He forgot, however, to tell the House that he made such long speeches that he had killed one if not two important Bills.

MR. REES: They were very short speeches.

*MR. J. MACVEAGH said they were long enough to kill the Bills and that was a record which was not surpassed even by the Member for the City of London. The hon. Member had sinned not only by the length but also by the frequency of his speeches. He had made more speeches in the House during the past year than the hon. Member for the City of London. He had had the curiosity to look up the general index to *Hansard* for last year, and he found that the hon. Member who was so anxious for few and short speeches, during last session spread himself over no less than 178 subjects and took the House into his confidence with regard to his views upon all those topics. Only three of them had any reference to Montgomeryshire, but the hon. Member thought Imperially. He was only a parish politician, but an hon. Member with an Imperial mind like the mover of the Resolution was able to talk upon every subject under the sun. He admitted that long speeches were a bad thing, but he thought frequent speeches from some people were even worse. The hon. Member did not seem to appreciate the distinction between verbosity and loquacity. It was not given to everybody to be omniscient, but it was given to the hon. Member to think that he was. During the last session he had told the House what he thought about the extension of the Djibutu railway in Abyssinia. He had never heard of the railway until he heard the hon. Member holding forth about it, and he doubted very much if the hon. Member had ever heard of it himself until he read something in the *Daily Mail*, or some other equally veracious organ, about it. The hon. Member had entertained the House with his views of the necessity for the erection of Christian schools for heathen children in Central Africa. He had told the House what he thought about the erosion of the Chinde River bank. He thought at first it was in Montgomery, and that it had some connection with the Royal Commission recently appointed on coast erosion. But no; it was out in Siam or some place like that. It was certainly not in this country. He had confided to the House his views about the rumoured discovery of a cure for sleeping sickness on the Congo. He never proposed any cure for sleeping sickness which showed itself during some speeches at Westminster. He had spoken on another occasion about the rewards paid for slaying leopards and tigers and the danger to Chiromo from lions, and about the Raipur-Vizianagram scheme and the Vizagapatam Railway. On four occasions he had held forth on the operations of the tsetse fly. Any hon. Member could escape from long speeches by going out to the library, the smokingroom, or the bar, but he defied any man to escape from the speeches of the hon. Member. If he attempted to discharge his duties in that House efficiently he entered the Chamber at the imminent risk of finding the hon. Member in possession, and therefore, holding strongly as he did that obstruction arose not from the length of speeches but from the frequency of bad speeches, he should oppose this Motion unless the hon. Member could see his way to accept the Amendment which he suggested.

MR. STEADMAN (Finsbury, Central) said he strongly supported the Motion. Parliament would never get through half the work it had promised the country unless some reform in this direction was made. He had occupied the time of the House on one or two occasions for an hour at least, but if there was a standing order similar to that of the county council he had no doubt he could condense his remarks within the prescribed time. He had not succeeded in catching the Speaker's eye on the Port of London Bill, though he had served his apprenticeship on the river and knew more about it and its docks than any Member who had spoken in the debate. He failed again to catch the Speaker's eye on the Budget night. On the other hand he noticed that some Members spoke on every subject that came before the House. No man should attempt to speak merely for the sake of speaking. If he knew from a practical point of view the subject under discussion he might enlighten the House. It did not matter how humble a position a man might occupy in the social scale, if the House thought he was an honest man it was always willing to give him a fair hearing. He did not throw the responsibility for long speeches on the Government. Private Members were more responsible than the Government. On a Friday, for example, a private Member moved the second reading of a Bill in a speech lasting an hour, and the seconder followed his example. When the closure was moved the Speaker refused it, and he did not wonder. The mover defeated his own object by the length of his speech. A working men's congress could show the House of Commons how to get through business. They curtailed a mover to ten minutes and a seconder to five, and if they did not get through business fast enough they curtailed even more than that. The London County Council could not get through their work without the fifteen minutes limit. They had about sixty committees and sub-committees meeting weekly. A member was allowed to occupy more time by permission of the Council, and he had never known permission refused. There was, however, a great difference between the County Council and the House of Commons—one was an administrative and the other a legislative body—and, to be fair to Cabinet Ministers, whether Liberal or Tory, there were matters which it was impossible for them to explain thoroughly under an hour or even two hours, and he should not be prepared to support a proposal to limit their speeches to an hour or less. The closure, he agreed, was undemocratic, but there were times when drastic measures had to be taken, otherwise the Party in power could not get a single measure through, and there were times when many of them wearied of the speechifying that was done for pure obstruction and welcomed the closure. This was not the only Assembly that had to adopt the closure to get its work through. He doubted whether the Licensing Bill would get through Committee before Christmas unless the Government adopted the principle of closure by compartments. The country was looking to the present Government to do some work. They had years of social legislation to pick up. They had not done much at present—not so much as he would like to see them do. Labour Members stood in a far different position from that of the average Member. They were bombarded outside by their own people. When they asked him why this, that, and the other was not done, he told them that if they came to the House they would see the reason for themselves. The way the time God Almighty had given them was wasted was downright wicked. He appealed to the mover of the Resolution to adopt the suggestion of the Home Secretary, who had made it perfectly clear to him that a drastic alteration such as this Resolution proposed could not be made in five minutes. The hon. Member had served his purpose by introducing the Motion, and had got further than anyone else had got by the offer the Home Secretary had made. He could have no fear if the matter went to a Committee. It would be thought out and in the end they would get a practical remedy for the wilful waste of time that now went on.

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) said that he, eight years ago, seconded a Motion for restriction of length of speeches moved by his hon. and gallant friend, but he had altered his opinion. The views of "Whips" in regard to speeches varied; there were times when a long-speech Member was a good friend; there were times when he had known energetic efforts adopted to bring a speech to a rapid conclusion. If this Motion were carried, the duty of Whips would be easier, for it might be assumed that every Member would speak to his half-hour limit. ["No."] The condition of things had changed. Time was when they had a free House, but now the Government had established four tied houses in the Committee-rooms upstairs, where political refreshment was dispensed without the semblance of police supervision in the shape of an official reporter. All their proceedings were conducted in secret, and now that the Government had got these four tied houses he appealed to the Patronage Secretary to let them have this old established free House of Commons open to public discussion. Let them tie the houses upstairs, but at least they should give them the old established free public House downstairs. This was a very great amendment of their Rules of Procedure to be brought in by a private Member. Such an alteration of procedure as the Motion would effect should be made on the responsibility of the Government, not of a private Member. He could recollect occasions when speeches had been interrupted by Motions, "That the hon. Member be no longer heard." Speakers Peel and Gully had ruled that such a Question could not be put. That was quite right. Thus they came to this, that a Question which two predecessors of the Speaker ruled they could not put, could be decided by one voice against 668. That was a total subversion of the practice, customs, and Rules of the House. He thought it would be very unfair to the Opposition, whether the official Opposition or hon. Members from Ireland or hon. Members who represented Labour, that a Minister should be allowed to make a speech of any length while they were precluded from speaking for more than half an hour on Second Reading, or a quarter of an hour in Committee. The House had always been exceedingly generous towards minorities, and was it fair that in addition to having all the power of numbers, all the weight of ability and knowledge which necessarily attached to those who sat on the Treasury Bench, and all their permanent staffs behind them, they should also have a great majority of the hours of speech in the House? How would such a rule work in connection with the discussion of a Home Rule Bill, or a great Army Bill? The Prime Minister of the day would get up with all his facts before him and make a most eloquent First Reading speech. The Leader of the Opposition who would follow would be limited to half an hour. Difficult as it was to make a carefully prepared speech in half an hour, it was quite impossible on the spur of the moment to condense into that time one's criticism of Government proposals which had just been heard for the first time. The leaders of the Irish Party and of the Labour Party would be put in the same difficulty. He did not think that either the House or the country would like this restriction. The country liked a debate to be fairly carried out on both sides of the House. As to the limit proposed for the Committee stage, he would give the House a concrete illustration of how it would work. On Monday next the House in Committee would discuss the Budget Resolution on the income-tax. The Prime Minister had given the ordinary pledge that on that Resolution they would be allowed to discuss the whole financial arrangements of the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer on that occasion would be able to speak for half an hour, an hour, or two hours if he liked. His right hon. friend the Member for the City of London, if the limit were in force, would only be able to speak for fifteen minutes. He would only speak for fourteen and a half minutes, and, paraphrasing language which was historic, he might say "I will sit down now, but you will hear me after a minute and a half." He himself would get up and say "I agree with my right hon. friend, and I intend to vote with him," and his right hon. friend would get up again and speak for fourteen and a half minutes. Then another hon. friend would get up and speak for a minute, and thereafter his right hon. friend the Member for the City of London would get up again to continue his speech. [An HON. MEMBER: Where does the Speaker come in?] He was pointing out the absolute futility of the proposal. Instead of economising time, speeches would become longer. The whole thing was so fantastic that it would not work, and he hoped the House would not adopt the proposal. If they were going to put the Government in first, and then close the Opposition's innings in half an hour, the country, he was sure, would not consider it fair. This proposal was a serious invasion of the liberties of the House; it would do nothing to economise time, and it would seriously handicap some of the younger Members.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) expressed regret that the right hon. Gentleman's position as Chief Opposition Whip entailed more or less enforced silence, because his speeches when they were made were very great contributions to debate. If the Motion went to a division, he would vote for it. He had a Motion on the Paper to the effect that private or unofficial Members should be in exactly the same category as Government Members. He remembered an occasion when Mr. Courtney, now Lord Courtney, got up and said he would be very pleased indeed if special privileges were given to Cabinet Ministers, and Mr. Gladstone, speaking with excitement, replied—

> "I will never sit in a House of Commons in which the equality of Members is not acknowledged."

The right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary did not act up to the principle of his revered father. He did not agree with the details of the scheme proposed by the hon. Gentleman opposite, but he would vote for the Motion as an expression of his approval of the principle that speeches in this House should be curtailed. His hon., gallant, and extremely acute friend said that this Resolution was in the interest of private Members. It was not in the interests of private Members. He had been in this House during five Parliaments, and he maintained that if a Resolution of this kind had been carried into action it would have rid the House of Commons of its greatest nuisance — the astoundingly stupid and extremely dull Parliamentary bore. [Cries of "Name."] Confession was good for the soul. He remembered standing up when, as he thought, a very serious outrage was committed on account of inconsiderate action in regard to the privileges of other Members. In those days of three hours debates, when the idea was to inform public opinion, a Gentleman unduly monopolised the time of the House. He knew he was out of order, and committed a Parliamentary crime by asking Mr. Speaker whether there was any way of stopping that Gentleman, whereupon Mr. Speaker said that there was no way of stopping a man who had once begun. There was, however, one way of stopping a Member, and that was by the Parliamentary cry of "Divide"—when they did not want to divide at all, but only to get him to stop orating. There were rules against tedious and irrelevant repetition, and a very wise rule which forbade a man to read his speech, for clearly he might go on reading and reading and never come to a conclusion. Then there was "the sense of the House." No one cared to set himself against "the sense of the House"; he would not do it even it were only to gratify his own vanity, for violating "the sense of the House" defeated its object. If speeches were shortened other Members would have an opportunity of speaking, which they would not otherwise have at all. He was bound to say—and the speeches of the Leader of the Opposition bore out the idea—that the present principle was that the Government and official Members should be the speakers, and the private Members should be a kind of Greek chorus to cry out "Hear, hear." That principle was largely carried out now. Everyone who knew Parliamentary history was aware that every measure of reform that made for the comfort of the people, for human freedom, for broadening the franchise, for extending the benefits of education, had been proposed first by private Members. The effect of the Resolution would be that private Members might just as well be abolished and an automaton substituted which would say—at proper intervals—"Hear, hear." At present young Members were actually snubbed, except they were friends of the people in power. How often had young Menbers—especially on the Tory side—come into this House with the greatest Parliamentary ambitions, and hoping to be permitted to make a deep impression. But when he had only spoken a few sentences, up would come a friend and whisper: "We have been delighted to hear your speech, but Mr. Balfour cannot move the closure. Do, my young friend, sit down." His noble friend had taken the Resolution to pieces, and had shown all the objections that could be made to it. What he asked was, was every man who came into the House to have a fair chance of taking part in its deliberations—every man who wished to inform public opinion? He ought to be heard, whether they agreed with him or not. At the same time he believed that anyone who had a gospel to deliver to the House could deliver himself of it within thirty minutes. But now they had an official set of debaters on the one side of the House or the other, their supporters were supposed to sit quiet and listen to them and to be delighted with them. He spoke in reference to this Motion in a purely altruistic spirit. He had been always well received in the House; he had always had his say whether he was in or out of order; but the cardinal objection he had to the proposal of the hon. Member—though he would vote for it—was that it differentiated between the official and the private Members of Parliament. If carried out in its entirety it would give a preference to the right hon. Member for Bordesley over Mr. Cobden, and make a distinction between one Member and another. He did not like to think that they were very much superior to their predecessors—or inferior. He knew that he had already transcended the ten minutes rule, but he could not help saying that the idea of official members having a precedence over Irish Members was simply intolerable, because they would always be unofficial Members in that House. When they got a Parliament of their own they would be delighted to take office. He would say one word as to the preference given to the official as against the unofficial Members. He believed Mr. Parnell when in this House held, probably, a position greater than that of a Cabinet Minister, yet he remembered that when Mr. Parnell rose to deny that he was the writer of the letters the infamous *fac similes* of which appeared in *The Times*, a member of the Government of the day obtained precedence because he was an official Member and by talking at great length successfully prevented Mr. Parnell from putting his denial and his explanation plausibly before the House in time to get into the Press. That showed the great danger of differentiating between official and unofficial Members. It had not been the practice merely of the present generation to make long speeches. Long speeches were unknown until the time of Chatham. Long speeches, which he introduced, had gone on ever since. But his successors were not such geniuses as Chatham. The Members of the present Treasury Bench were men of respectable but not dazzling ability, and were only slightly more clever than private Members. If a rule of this kind was passed it would prevent selfishness and give due consideration to the rights of private Members, and give the young men their chances. As he believed the private Members had started all proposals which made for freedom and the well-being of the people of this country he would with great fervour support the Resolution.

Mr. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.) said the Motion provided him with one of those rare opportunities upon which he could vote against some of his colleagues, and particularly the hon. and learned Gentlemen who had just sat down. He should vote against this proposal because he discovered in it the Liberal Imperialist alternative to Home Rule. As at present constituted this Assembly was neither efficient or effective. If this Motion were carried, the effect would be to make this Assembly efficient and effective, and to that, as an Irishman, he objected. So far as Ireland was concerned this Parliament either did nothing or did harm, and he preferred that it should do the former. What was the Parliamentary history of the hon. Member who introduced this Motion? Last Session he spoke on 178 different subjects, and upon the Bill for the extension of the suffrage to women, argued, in support of its rejection, that their loquacity made them politically incapable. The hon. Gentleman then entertained the House with voluminous extracts from the Old Testament in favour of his contention, and but for the merciful rule which terminated debate on a Friday at five o'clock, the hon. Member in his endeavour to talk the Bill out would no doubt still be quoting Jeremiah. The real reason of the hon. Member's moving this Resolution was that he desired to speak on the Indian Budget, and to occupy the time that was taken up on that occasion by the Secretary of State for India. The true and inward explanation of that desire was that the hon. Gentleman had written a book upon India, a very interesting book—he himself had read the preface of it—and the hon. Gentleman desired in the debate on the Indian Budget to read the book piecemeal to the House. Was that a humane proposal; was it a proposal that would tend to the efficiency of this House? He had now mentioned his main objection, he had others, to this proposal. It was entirely hostile and unconstitutional. The genius of the British was much admired by those who thought they possessed it. Not possessing it himself, he could speak with detached admiration of it. But the genius of Great Britain was naturally long-winded, dilatory, and diverse. The Motion of the hon. Gentleman aimed at all that. He sincerely sympathised with the Home Secretary as the Minister in charge who had to listen to the debate. He would have thought, having regard to his record, the Secretary of State for War would have been a far better judge of the matter. Speaking from the detached and impartial standpoint of a foreigner, he had said that his main objection to the Motion was that it was contrary and hostile to the genius of Great Britain. This Assembly did not exist for the purpose of making laws. If the people had wanted laws, they could have chosen a much more effective method of obtaining them. It existed in the first place in order to relieve the feelings of the electors, and in the second place—and it was a very subordinate one—in order to make laws. In certain other spheres they found the genius of the country opposed to the imposition of a time-limit. The Licensing Bill was objected to because it established a time-limit; they went to Egypt promising to leave in six months, and they had been there ever since; they went to South Africa expecting to take a picnic to Pretoria in a few months, and it took them three years; they passed a Land Act in 1903 which was very popular in Ireland in 1852 at the very latest. The sole effect of the Motion would be to make the House a more effective instrument for doing what he thought it ought not to do, and that was attempting the vain and impossible task of governing the country from which he came.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said he had listened to every speech, and with the single exception of the mover, though several Members had expressed their intention of voting for the Resolution, no one had supported it in a whole-hearted manner. The hon. Member for South Donegal seemed to have been under the impression that he was discussing the Second Reading of a Bill, and that he could reserve to himself the right of amending it in Committee. His argument was that he was so anxious that the principle that new Members should have the power of speech should be adopted that, though he disagreed with the Resolution in every particular, he was going to vote for it. He could hardly have realised that to-morrow all the evils that he had shown—preference given to right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench as against the leaders of his own Party and of the Labour Party—would result. He agreed with him thoroughly. The fatal principle that there should be a difference between Members of the House would ensue.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: The hon. Baronet said that this Resolution could not be made a general Order. I accordingly deferred to his information and supported the Resolution.

SIR F. BANBURY said the hon. Member had misunderstood his informant. If the Motion were carried it would become a Sessional Order; and, if it was put in one Motion and not two, it would become a Standing Order. He had looked at the debates upon this question before, and he found that it was the Member for the Scotland division of Liverpool who said that absolute and perfect equality between all Members had always been the guiding principle of the House from time immemorial. By this Resolution they would alter that, and put the Members of the Treasury Bench in a position totally different from that of any other Member. They were not even going to include the Members of the Front Opposition Bench. The Chief Whip had pointed out with very great force the evils which must result. The Secretary for War, for example, on the Vote for men might make a speech of two hours or more. The speech might be interesting and absolutely necessary, but the speech of his predecessor on the Front Opposition Bench would he limited to a quarter of an hour. Was it fair that questions of that sort should be dealt with in such a way? They had heard from hon. Gentlemen opposite that they wanted to restore freedom of discussion and to prevent Parliament becoming an instrument to register the decrees of the Government. Here they had an hon. gentleman who had been only two-and-a-half years in Parliament and who, without any real knowledge of its proceedings, brought forward a Motion which would give his leaders on the Treasury Bench an advantage which was denied to all other Members. The reason given for bringing forward the Motion was that the hon.

Member did not think a sufficient number of Members spoke. He was supported by the hon. Member for Stepney who thought it would facilitate business, and went on to say that if the rule were adopted he would be able to speak oftener. On great debates or Second Readings, on which occasions he never attempted to rise and, therefore, he was not speaking in a personal way, if the rule was adopted there would be at the most another hour in each day at liberty, and consequently perhaps two more Members would speak. On the Second Reading of the Licensing Bill the best speeches were the long ones. The speeches of the hon. Baronet the Member for Spen Valley and the hon. Member for Hackney were very powerful contributions to the debate, and they exceeded an hour, but the vast majority of speeches did not. The hon. Member for Plymouth said that young Members had been eleven months in the House before they were called upon. It was a rule of the House that when a new Member got up to make his maiden speech he was always called upon.

*Mr. MALLET: May I interrupt? It has not been the invariable practice in this Parliament.

Sir F. BANBURY said it might happen that the Speaker might not know at the moment whether it was a new Member, but the moment his attention was called to the fact that a new Member had risen he held it was the custom of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees to call on him at once.

*Mr. MALLET: I think the difficulty is due to the fact that in this Parliament you have sometimes had half-a-dozen new Members trying to make a maiden speech at the same time.

Sir F. BANBURY said that was rather an illustration of the reason why the Resolution had been brought in. It had been brought in because this was a new Parliament with a large number of new Members, and difficulties were inevitable. But it would be foolish to destroy rules and regulations which had been in existence for hundreds of years merely because in a new and very exceptional Parliament five or six Gentlemen particularly wished at the same time to speak. This alteration would not give them the privilege that they desired. One or two might get it and the other four or five would go away and be still more despondent and angry than they were now, when perhaps not so many of them desired to speak. The result of this would in no way facilitate business on big nights. The waste of time, as the hon. Member for Stepney called it, would go on just as much as it did now, because more Members would speak. The hon. Member said he would like the Resolution limited to private Bills and the restriction on Members of the Treasury Bench removed, and if these alteration were too drastic he would like it confine it to set speeches on certain nights, and on the Second Readings of Government measures full fling would be given to everybody. Then how could he support the Resolution if full fling was given to everybody? But there was a very much greater danger even than this. It was not everybody that went to the House regularly every day. The situation which the hon. Member disliked arose only upon set debates upon Government questions which were interesting to the country; but there were a great many other discussions on other topics when the House was by no means full, and when every Member who desired might speak. Very often there were not enough Members to speak.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the debate stood adjourned.

CORONERS (IRELAND) BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

Adjourned at four minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Thursday, 21*st May*, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [H.L.].—Presented (pursuant to leave given yesterday), and read 1ª.

South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, without amendment.

Bristol Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

North-East London Railway Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1ª, and referred to the examiners.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Order (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.]; Gas Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Committed.

Gas and Water Orders Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Sevenoaks Water Order and the Stourbridge Water Order.

Tramways Orders Confirmation (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Potteries and North Staffordshire (Amendment) Order.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—Committed. The Committee to be proposed by the Committee of Selection in regard to the Bridgwater Port and Navigation Order and the Llandudno Pier Order.

Pier and Harbour Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Committed.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

I.—Orders made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade.—London United Tramways Light Railways (Extension of Time) Order, 1908; Amending the London United Tramways (Light Railway Extensions) Order, 1904. Clacton-on-Sea and St. Osyth Light Railway (Extension of Time) Order, 1908; Reviving the powers granted, and extending the periods limited, by the Clacton-on-Sea and St. Osyth Light Railway Order 1904, for the compulsory purchase of lands and for the completion of the railway and works by that Order authorised, and for other purposes.

II.—Orders made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and confirmed by the Board of Trade.—Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Light Railway) Amendment Order, 1908; Amending the Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway Act, 1901, and the Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Light Railway) Order, 1907, in reference to the fund deposited in respect of the application for the Act of 1901, and otherwise. Campbeltown and Machrihanish Light Railway (Amendment) Order, 1908; Amending the Campbeltown and Machrihanish Light Railway Order, 1905, by increasing borrowing powers, and for other purposes.

MINES AND QUARRIES (GENERAL REPORT AND STATISTICS, FOR 1907: PART I. DISTRICT STATISTICS).

Statistics of the persons employed, output, and accidents at mines and quarries in the United Kingdom, arranged according to the inspection districts.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND).

Return of evictions in Ireland for the quarter ended 31st March, 1908.

Presented (by command) and ordered to lie on the Table.

COMMONS ACT, 1876 (TOWYN TREWAN COMMON, ANGLESEY).

Report by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries upon an application for a provisional order for the regulation of Towyn Trewan Common, in the parishes of Llanfihangel-yn-nhowyn, Llechylched, and Llanfaelog, in the county of Anglesey; laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

The Lords following were named of the Committee to join with a Committee of the House of Commons to consider the said Bill, viz. :—

V. Milner.
L. Clinton.
L. Hamilton of Dalzell.
L. Leith of Fyvie.
L. Ritchie of Dundee.

Ordered, That such Committee have power to agree with the Committee of the House of Commons in the appointment of a Chairman.

Then a Message was ordered to be sent to the House of Commons in answer to their Message of the 14th instant, to inform them of the appointment of the said Committee by this House, and to propose that the Joint Committee do meet in Committee Room A on Wednesday next, at Three o'clock.

PREFERENTIAL TRADE.

Order of the Day read for resuming the adjourned debate on the Motion of the Duke of Marlborough, that an humble Address be presented to His Majesty praying for Papers relating to the recent changes which have been made in the tariffs of the self-governing Colonies for promoting their economic development and the extension of their trade relations with the United Kingdom and foreign countries.

*LORD AVEBURY: My Lords, the noble Viscount on the cross benches who concluded the debate last evening, and who is always listened to with interest in any meeting of his countrymen, referred to the negotations that took place between Canada and France and pointed out that Canada was practically forced to make this agreement. What he meant to say, I suppose, was that the arguments in favour of that course were so strong that the Canadian Ministers felt they could not resist them in the interests of Canada. Whether we had given a preference or not would have made no difference in that argument. But where should we have been if we had granted preference? We should have entirely altered our fiscal policy, and yet the preference for which we did so alter it would have been taken away from us. I could not quite gather what the opinion of the noble Viscount was as to the effect of duties. When he was discussing the duties imposed by foreign countries he told us that no doubt foreign countries were very glad of a system under which they "taxed our imports as much as they pleased and we never retaliated," and I thought, when I heard those words, that the noble Viscount was against duties; but when he came to consider the case of the Colonies he adopted quite a different tone. He told us that our exports to Canada were not interfered with by the duties, and that in consequence of the protection they were larger than they otherwise would be. The noble Viscount said—

> "If a free trade or less protected Canada is good for seventy or ninety million dollars worth of imports, a highly-protected Canada would be good for 300 million dollars."

*VISCOUNT MILNER: I stated, as a matter of fact, that highly-protected Canada had between \$200,000,000 and \$300,000,000 of imports, as against \$70,000,000 to \$90,000,000 under a less protective system.

*LORD AVEBURY: But does the noble Lord attribute the increase to the duties? At any rate, it shows I think, some difference of opinion as to the effect of import duties when imposed by the Colonies, and by foreign countries. I confess I read with surprise the Resolution which the noble Duke has placed upon the Paper. He states that the changes in the tariffs of the Colonies have been made with the intention—

> "Of promoting their economic development and the extension of their trade relations with the United Kingdom and foreign countries."

and of—

> "Increasing the productive power of the Mother Country and the Empire as a whole by the arrangement of reciprocal preferences."

In the first place, as regards foreign countries, surely the whole tendency of the preference given by our self-governing Colonies has been, not to foster, but to check trade with foreign countries. So far as we are concerned they have given us a preference, for which we are grateful. I am as anxious as any one to promote commerce with our Colonies. But do the Colonial Governments, do our tariff reformers, really wish to increase British imports? That is another question. I could not occupy the time of the House by going through even the principal Colonies. I will take two—Canada and Australia. As regards Canada, Mr. Fielding, the Minister of Finance, at the Conference of 1902, said—

> "If we are asked to reduce our duties and bring in British goods and displace Canadian manufactures, we must frankly say that it is not possible for us to do so. But we may say that it is quite possible to give an advantage to British goods in some cases by raising the tariff."

And Sir W. Lyne since returning to Australia spoke even more strongly. Referring to the new tariff (if we may trust the report) in a speech reported in the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, he said—

> "This is not going to be any milk-and-water tariff. It is going through the Federal Parliament unaltered, except in a few isolated cases; and we will fight it to the bitter end. If I can make it prohibitive, I shall be glad. Importers are parasites on the trade of the Commonwealth."

This is to say, the Australian Finance Minister would, if he could, abolish imports altogether. Merchants are "parasites" whom he would like to suppress. Mr. Fielding would not go so far. He prefers English imports to foreign imports, but opposes any reduction of duties, which might increase imports and develop commerce. The object they both have in view is to discourage commerce, but especially that with foreign countries. In fact, protection of native industry means the discouragement of imports and of commerce. That is apparently the object, it is certainly the tendency, of the recent changes—to exclude foreign goods altogether and only admit British, as a witty Australian free trader said—

> "On payment of a duty which would keep them out."

Do the Colonies wish, or do they not wish, to promote commerce with the Mother Country? With one hand they give us a preference, and we are grateful; but with the other they impose duties expressly to keep out our goods. The duties are not for revenue, for if that were the object they might be counterbalanced, as ours are, by Excise duties and would then be much more remunerative. They are, indeed, frankly intended to check the imports from the Mother Country. In this unfortunate tendency to exclude our manufactures they have been greatly encouraged by the action of so-called fiscal reformers here, whose policy is radically retrograde and who wish to carry us back to the terrible times of the hungry forties. What is the position of the Colonies? Surely their wisest policy would be to develop their splendid agricultural resources, and by taking our products enable us to purchase more of theirs. They would get cheap manufactures from us, and we should receive cheap food and raw materials from them—to the great benefit of both.

Consider the case of Australia. Their policy compels their farmers to pay 20 or 30 per cent. more than they need for their agricultural implements, their clothes—in fact, for almost everything they need except food; it checks the development of their railways by raising unnecessarily the price of iron rails; and, as far as they can, they close our markets against their own produce, for as they diminish our exports they diminish our demand for their wool and wheat. They injure themselves, for their duties drive us to other markets. If they admitted our products more freely we could take more of theirs. All these high duties check commerce, and drive trade into unnatural and less profitable directions. The noble Duke is under the impression that the modifications recently proposed in the Australian tariff will promote trade relations with the United Kingdom. I am not sure whether those changes have been actually passed, but I fear they would have the very opposite effect. At any rate, such is the opinion of those engaged in the Australian trade. At a large meeting held in the London Chamber of Commerce the following resolution was adopted—

> "That this meeting of the Australian Section and other members of the London Chamber

of Commerce protests against the imposition of further duties on British goods entering the Commonwealth, which, in spite of the financial support accorded to Australian industries by merchants and investors here, will seriously harm the manufacturing industries of the United Kingdom."

The Chamber of Commerce applied to leading Australian firms, and I hold in my hands their replies. For woollens and clothing, the answer is that the result will—

> "Seriously damage British manufacturers and curtail trade. Orders sent under the old tariff have been cancelled."

For mining machinery, they say that—

> "The new tariff is almost, if not quite, of a prohibitive nature."

For furniture, that it has—

> "Killed our Australian trade."

And for motor vehicles, that it will—

> "Cause great injury to automobilism in Australia."

I must not, however, take up the time of the House by giving further extracts, which are more or less strongly to the same effect. Commerce is, after all, only exchange, and Colonial statesmen, as well as some here, do not seem to realise that if you stop imports, you check exports. As Mr. Chamberlain himself very well said at the Colonial Conference of 1902—

> "Now, what is the present position? I believe it is true of Canada—it is true, I believe of every Colony—we take already by far the largest proportion of Colonial exports, but there is not the least doubt that we might double or treble the amount that we take, but we cannot do so until we have the reciprocal advantage, and until you take in exchange a larger proportion of our goods, and so enable us to pay for the imports which we should receive from you."

We all wish to encourage commerce with the Colonies, but has the noble Duke considered how preferences could be given to the Colonies? Our imports from them are either food or raw materials. We understand that tariff reformers do not propose to tax raw materials. Do they really expect to persuade our countrymen to tax food? There are some, no doubt, who oppose the taxation on food or raw materials, but see no objection to the taxation of manufactures. They say that we import many millions—some £150,000,000—why not tax them? But what are manufactured articles? The Board of Trade include under that head pig iron, copper, lead, leather, indigo, quinine, and many other things which are really raw materials. Indeed, if we except, perhaps, works of art, the manufactured articles of one trade are the raw materials of some other. Moreover, if we look at any highly protected country, we find that if the policy profits any persons at all—and in the long run I doubt it—still those who gain are but 5 per cent., and those who suffer are 95 per cent. Mr. Atkinson, the great American economist, calculated that the result of the United States duties on iron and steel was that, in the ten years 1880–1890, the railway companies, the iron founders, machinists, and other consumers of steel in the United States paid for iron in excess of the prices paid by their competitors in Europe, a sum "greater than the capital value of all the iron and steel works, furnaces, and rolling mills existing in 1890 in the whole country. This sum stands for the cost of protection to iron and steel for ten years of largest consumption to that date."

Lord Avebury.

And how could we benefit the Colonies by giving them a preference? The main export of Australia is wool. No preference on wool would benefit Australia, for the simple reason that we cannot consume all the wool that she produces. How about Canada? Here it is a question of wheat, but by the time the Canadian wheat is ready for exportation the Canadian ports are shut by the ice, and it comes to us in bond through the United States. It is practically impossible, therefore, even if we would, to give Canada a preference on wheat. We tried the system of Colonial preferences for years, and it broke down utterly. It was carefully inquired into and condemned by the House of Commons Committee, and one reason for abandoning it was that it gave rise to so much evasion. Cargoes of coffee were sent, not only from Brazil, but even out of bond, from England, to the Cape of Good Hope, whence the coffee was re-exported to England and admitted under the preferential rate of duty. Similarly cargoes of timber were sent from the Baltic to Halifax, and thence re-shipped to England as Colonial timber, the difference of duty making the transaction a very profitable one for the timber exporter. It has recently been stated in Australia that the preference has been a "gift" to us of £1,500,000 because we should have paid that much more in duties if our goods had come in under the foreign tariff. But does this follow? Who saved the £1,500,000? Free traders maintain that the Australian consumers would have paid £1,500,000 more, and that they consequently were the gainers.

This raises the whole question of who pays the duties. Do they fall on the producer or on the consumer? Free traders maintain that the consumer pays them. For instance, the price of wheat in Berlin is higher than in London by the amount of the German duty. But if the consumer pays the duty, it is surely evident that the Colonial policy has not promoted their economic development. On the contrary, it had the very opposite effect. It has diverted capital and labour from the healthiest and most profitable occupations. They have millions of acres of uncultivated land waiting to be developed, enough to occupy their whole population in the most profitable and advantageous manner, and yet they devise a system which tempts their people from the land, and crowds them into the cities on less remunerative occupations. I say less remunerative, because if these occupations were not less remunerative they would not require to be bolstered up by protective duties. I could understand a country making some sacrifice to discourage their people from living in the slums of great cities and carry them out into the country. Of course, the Colonies must determine their own policy; we have no right to complain, and do not complain of their high duties; but it fills me with astonishment that they should think it desirable to promote life in the slums and raise the price of necessaries, in order to discourage people from benefiting by the healthy life and fresh air of the country.

Will the advocates of preference to the Colonies condescend to give us a little information as to what articles they intend to give a preference on? We hear many vague professions in support of preferential trade with the Colonies, but I wish we had more precise information as to how this is to be effected. Then we could deal with the question more satisfactorily. The preference which most of our Colonies have given us is a boon, and we are grateful for it. We believe, moreover, that it will benefit them as much as us; but that the tendency of their fiscal legislation on the whole is to check, not to benefit, commerce. To some extent we, no doubt, shall suffer, but they themselves will do so even more. Some of our statesmen are alarmed for the future of British commerce. With the present tendency to protection, what, they say, is to become of us in the future? They need, I think, have no fear. No doubt, when we consider the very high duties imposed by various countries on our goods—duties imposed not for revenue, but to keep out our products, or, as it is euphemistically called, to "protect native industries"—it seems at first wonderful that we can do business with them at all. The explanation, no doubt, partly is that, firstly, manufacturers in these countries take advantage of their own countrymen, raise prices to the extent of the duties, and put the money into their own pockets at the expense of the community. This enables our manufaturers to pay the duties and yet compete with them. And, secondly, no country produces all that it requires. It is impossible to protect manufactures which do not exist. These considerations seem to me to relieve us from the apprehension felt by some of our statesmen, that if foreign countries and our own Colonies become more and more protectionist they will thus more and more restrict our commerce.

We should, however, have the advantage of cheap raw materials, and whatever any other country required, if they could not produce it and we could, they would find it to their advantage to purchase of us, rather than from any protectionist country. In fact, protectionist countries would surrender, as I have shown that they have already to a great extent surrendered to us, the neutral markets, so far as we can supply them and they cannot supply themselves. We need, then, have no fear for our commerce in the future so long as we maintain our free trade policy. Our trade is not, as is sometimes supposed, at the mercy of other countries; they may injure their own countrymen, they may to some extent diminish the commerce of the world, and ours as part of it, but they will restrict and injure their own most. If all the rest of the world became protectionist we should still be wise to remain free traders. Our trade is increasing more rapidly than that of any other country in the world. The late Lord Goschen, in his last speech in this House, expressed a hope that we should not "gamble" with the food of our people. I hope that neither your Lordships' House nor the House of Commons will ever gamble with our commerce on which the supplies of the food of the people mainly depend.

*VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: My Lords, we have just listened to the speech of a thorough-going free trader, and last night we had a very eloquent speech from the noble Viscount on the cross benches as a thorough-going advocate of preference. I have need of your Lordships' indulgence, because I confess I feel myself unable to agree with the thorough-going partisans on either side. The negative policy of the Government is not one of which I can approve. I have the strongest desire, for political rather than commercial reasons, that something should be done towards increasing and improving the commercial relations between the Mother Country and the Colonies, and to obtain that result I should not shrink from departing from the strict theory of free trade if I were satisfied that the departure would stop there. On the other hand, I by no means feel the confidence which the noble Duke and the noble Viscount who spoke last night appear to feel in the policy of Colonial preference. I think it is true, as Lord Cromer said last night, that the grant of preference by the United Kingdom to the Colonies has been tried in the past without satisfactory results. There seem to me practical difficulties of the gravest kind in the way of the adoption of that policy now. I trust that those who are unable to advocate the granting of preference to the Colonies will not be charged with neglecting the interests of this country or with lacking in desire to bind the Empire together, for I feel that desire as strongly as any one can.

I certainly do not, however wish to carp at any of the steps which the self-governing Colonies have taken to alter their tariffs in order, as they believe, to make a change which would be to the advantage of this country. Changes have been made, as the noble Duke reminded us yesterday, by Canada, by South Africa, and to some extent by New Zealand and Australia. The results of the changes may, I think, be fairly summed up:—In South Africa they have been very small, owing to the great depression which has prevailed there for some time; in New Zealand and in Australia they have not been large because the advantage given to this country has in itself been small. But they should, I think, be received with gratitude as evidences of good will towards the Mother Country, and I hope also as some recognition of the great burden which the Mother Country bears in regard to Imperial defence, and also of the free and open market which the Mother Country gives to the produce of all her Colonies.

The case of Canada is, however, different. The changes made in her tariff in recent years have increased the trade between Canada and this country. How has that been done? The noble Duke said it is due to preference given to us. I should put it another way, and say that it is because Canada has lowered her duties on British goods. That is what has really caused this increase in trade. It is not a mere grant of preference. You may give preference to a country without lowering your duties on her goods. You may do it by increasing the duties on the goods of other countries, and I very much doubt whether the effect of such preference would be nearly commensurate with the effect which the lowering of duties has had on the trade between Canada and the Mother Country.

The noble Duke, I think, represented, as one of his principal reasons for bringing forward this subject, that since the Imperial Conference last year, and, of course, long since the grant of this preference by Canada to the Mother

Country, there have been negotiations between Canada and France by which the preference given to us has been lowered in value to, in some cases, as low as 2½ per cent. The noble Duke seemed to conclude from that that all the benefit of the previous changes in the Canadian tariff would be lost to us. That is not my view. The concessions to France no doubt put us on a worse footing than before in our competition with France; but if there is any value whatever in our system of free imports, the effect must be that, given a fair field and no favour, we can beat France in the Canadian market on equal terms, except, perhaps, in such articles as silk and lace. The aptitude of the French people for manufacturing lace and silk goods may prevent us from beating them in regard to those articles; but take the articles which this country is best able to produce, and I maintain we can beat any other country on equal terms in any foreign or Colonial market.

That brings me to a point which I am very anxious to put before your Lordships, and that is the action of His Majesty's Government at the Imperial Conference. Those who have studied, as I have studied, the debates of the Colonial Conference of 1902, will remember that more than one of those who took part in that Conference seemed to be rather impressed with the idea that general preference might not be the best means of promoting trade between the Mother Country and the Colonies, because preference is no good when it relates to articles which neither country can send to the other, and that it might be better, in the case of Canada, for example, if a certain list of articles which we can and do send to Canada could be taken, and that the Canadian tariff on those articles should be lowered, of course to other countries as well as to ourselves. I should like to know why His Majesty's Government could not have taken up that idea and urged it on the representatives of the self-governing Colonies at the last Conference. It is obviously consistent with free trade. There is no question about that. I should not have ventured to criticise them for not assenting to the principle of preference, because they were bound by their own pledges and by the verdict of the country at the last general election. But if they had endeavoured to negotiate with, say, the Canadian representatives, on a basis of that kind, this country giving in return perhaps a subsidy for a fast line of Imperial steamships to and from Canada—which subsidy, to my mind, would have been much more justifiable in the interest of the Empire than the subsidy we gave to the Cunard Company in 1903—they might from their own point of view have made some little progress in establishing better commercial relations with the Colonies.

When the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies speaks presently I hope he will tell us why it was impossible to have adopted some attitude of that kind. I quite agree that it would not have been the particuler mode of action which the Colonial representatives at the Conference desired; but it would at least have shown that His Majesty's Government were anxious to promote the same object as they were. Anyone who reads the reports of the debates at the last Conference and compares the speeches with the speeches at the Conference in 1902 will see how enormously the desire of the self-governing Colonies for an arrangement with this country upon the basis of mutual preference has increased in the Colonies. It has increased to a point at which I do not think it can be met by a purely negative policy on the part of His Majesty's Government.

The self-governing Colonies have never suggested to this country that either we or they should impose any duties merely for the sake of preference which we or they did not want in our tariffs. They always say—"We are each of us free to impose duties or not in our own tariffs, but if you do impose duties, give us a preference, and we will give you a preference." At the last Conference a good deal was said by the Colonial representatives as to the possibility of a preferential arrangement by this country with the Colonies on the basis of our existing tariff. Of course, that would have meant that we should have given preference on alcohol, tobacco, coffee, cocoa, dried fruits, sugar, and tea. I think that such an arrangement might have been of some service to the Cape, Australia, and the West Indies; but it would not have been of any great service. The parts of the Empire which would have obtained most of the advantage from it would have been India and Ceylon, who have never asked for a preference of the kind, and who between them would have absorbed practically the whole of our tea duty. Of course, Canada would not have benefited at all.

Therefore, I do not think it would have been possible for any Government to have consented, as I think the noble Viscount on the cross benches suggested yesterday, to the principle of Colonial preference simply with regard to our existing duties. The crux of the whole question is, of course, whether this country is prepared to impose duties on corn, on meat, and on dairy produce. That, I think, is the point raised by my noble friend, and, indeed, by the noble Viscount on the cross benches. That idea was opposed at the Conference by the representatives of His Majesty's Government, and I do not think I am going too far when I say that their objection to any duty of that kind was the main strength of their objection to the grant of any Colonial preference by this country.

So far as the verdict of the electors at the last general election went, I think they were right. But the desire for better trade relations between Great Britain and her Colonies through a preference given by this country, has not only grown in the self-governing Colonies themselves, but it has grown in the United Kingdom as well. I think anybody who watches the political barometer, who sees the results of the elections that have taken place within the last year or two, must see that there is a movement in this country in that direction which no wise Government can neglect. You may think it contrary to the theory of free trade. Do not sacrifice a great good to the Empire merely on the ground of theory.

Let me examine for a moment what might be the effect here of duties of this kind. I do it, perhaps, from a somewhat independent point of view, because I was responsible for a small duty on corn myself. I think there are a good many people in this country whose minds have been tending in the direction of the possible imposition of such duties, or, at any rate, who are less opposed to them than they were two or three years ago, on account of the financial policy which His Majesty's present Government are pursuing. What is that policy? We have it before us now in all its nakedness. It is the increase of the burdens of the country, to an indefinite extent in the future, largely, no doubt, for what is called the social improvement of the people, and at the same time the repeal of indirect taxation. What is the ultimate object? I believe the ultimate object, if not of the Members of His Majesty's Government, at any rate, of the great party behind them, is that this increase of expenditure shall be borne by the payers of direct taxation, mainly by retaining the income-tax at a limit excessive and dangerous in time of peace; while, on the other hand, those who do not consume alcohol or tobacco and do not pay direct taxation shall be relieved altogether of the burden of the maintenance and defence of the Empire, and of these plans for social improvement which His Majesty's Government have in their minds.

I say that that is unsound finance. I say that it is not a fair distribution of the burden of expenditure among the people of this country. I believe that the minds of many, not only in the upper or middle classes in this country, are arriving at the same conclusion, and that there is a desire to add to the number of articles in our tariff merely for the reasons which I have stated. I believe the repugnance which undoubtedly existed to duties on corn, meat, and dairy produce has diminished. I think it may be said for these duties that they would produce a good deal in proportion to the amount of interference they would cause to trade. I do not deny that the imposition of duties of this kind, which could only be small—nobody has ever suggested that they should be anything but small—would have some effect on the price of the articles on which they are imposed. Mr. Chamberlain has never denied it, and nobody could deny it with reason. I have always admitted that my corn duty had this effect, that it tended to increase the price of the article when prices were rising and it tended to prevent the price from falling when prices were falling. Nobody has ever attempted to prove that the imposition of a small duty would have any greater effect. If that is all the effect it has, I must say that I do not think such duties would impose an undue contribution on the mass of the people towards the great and growing expenditure of this country.

Then comes the question of the practical working of the system of Colonial preference if it were brought about by the imposition of these duties, and, I am bound to say, this appears to me to be beset by difficulties of the greatest importance, one of which I will venture to place before your Lordships. Suppose we had made a bargain with Canada—that, I think, is the best case to take—that we would impose a duty on corn, meat, and dairy produce from foreign countries, and leave such articles coming from Canada free. The effect of that, if it was effective, would be to transfer the supply of these articles which now comes to us from foreign countries to Canada, and of course to any other colony which had the same advantage. That is a result which, so long as we get the articles cheaply, I do not know that anybody need quarrel with.

But, to whatever extent it did transfer that supply, you would lose the revenue upon the article. That is quite clear. If the time arrives, as, looking to the enormous area and possibilities of our great Colonies, it may arrive, when the Empire is self-supplying in regard to these articles, then all the revenue from the duty would be gone. There would be this additional effect, I think, that the burden would be gone also. For instance, there is a protective duty on corn in France, but in a year when there is a good harvest and France is self-supplying that duty has comparatively little effect on the price as compared with the effect in a year when there is a bad harvest and France cannot supply herself. In the same way nobody would contend for a moment that if we imposed a small duty on coal imported into this country it would have the least effect on the domestic price of our coal, for the simple reason that we produce much more coal than we can consume and we do not obtain any supply of it from abroad. Therefore, although you would lose your revenue, the effect of the duty in raising the price would also, in my judgment, disappear.

But there would be another result. Supposing the United States were deprived of the market for her corn in this country, what would she do? Surely if she saw it going she would come to us and say, "We do not like this at all. We are ready to make an arrangement with you. We will lower our tariff on some of your manufactured articles, which it is of great importance to you to send to us, if you will place us on the same footing as Canada with regard to the duty on corn."

What should we say? That is precisely the position which has occurred between this country and Canada and Canada and France. The difficulty at once arises, and it would be very much worse in our case because the trade between the United States and this country is very much more important in proportion than the trade between Canada and France, that, if we were bound to Canada not to alter the new duties that had been imposed for a certain number of years, we could only say to the United States, "We are very sorry, but we cannot relieve you from this duty." I know it is a very inconvenient thing sometimes to be bound not to impose a duty, but it may be very much worse than inconvenient to bind yourself not to take off a duty. We should, of course, be unable to obtain from the United States that which might be of the most urgent and utmost importance to the great manufacturing industries of this country.

Supposing the request was renewed when the term of our arrangement with Canada expired, what answer should we give then? If we had accepted the principle of preference because Canada is part of the Empire, and in order to obtain greater advantages in Canadian trade, we should have to depart from that principle at the risk of losing the trade advantages we had obtained from Canada in order to obtain the greater advantages which the reduction of the United States tariff might give us, and if we refused to make an arrangement with the United States, which might, as I have said, be of the utmost importance to our great industries, it would be said by everybody that we refused to do this in order to keep up the price of food. That seems to me to be a practical difficulty and one of very great importance. I do not wish, as I hope I have shown, to deal with this subject in any exaggerated spirit on either side. I am merely anxious to put before your Lordships the views upon it which occur to me from the standpoint of its practical working.

I feel that there are two principles in this matter which are hardly compatible. You want on the one side—and that is the great wish of my noble friend who leads the Opposition and of Mr. Balfour—to be in a position to bargain with foreign countries for reductions in their tariffs to your advantage. In this policy your principle is that you will treat other countries, including your Colonies, as they treat you. But then you want to depart from that principle by treating the Colonies better than other countries because they are part of the Empire. I am bound to say I am quite unable to see how you can work those two principles together. You may proceed on one or the other, but how you can practically combine the two I have never been able to understand. And I think what has happened in the case of Canada and France gives us some little inkling of the practical difficulty of that case.

Let me take another supposition, and it is one which certainly ought not to be neglected. I have been arguing upon the supposition that the preference would be really effective, and that a small duty on corn, meat, and dairy produce would really transfer our oversea supply of those articles, to a large extent at any rate, from foreign countries to our Colonies. Let me take the opposite supposition. These duties are to be small—that is an essential part of the case. Will small duties have that effect at all? Preference is a very easy thing to make effective when you give it on a high protective tariff. Preference on small duties is a very different thing. I remember when I proposed a duty on flour that it was supposed by some people that the competition of the United States millers with the English millers would be practically prevented. Nothing of the sort happened. Railway rates and steamship rates were lowered, and the American millers competed with our millers through that lowering of the rates in spite of the duty. And if all that you impose upon corn is a 2s. duty, and you have to deal with the able persons who regulate the railway and steamship traffic between Canada and the United States and England, I should not be at all surprised if certain arrangements were made by which that 2s. duty was made practically innocuous to the United States. Now, if that be so, what happens? At once Canada says, "What is the use of your 2s. duty? It has not done us any good at all. You have accepted the principle. You must increase the duty so as to make it effective." Well, what are we to say in answer to that? Are we to raise the duty? If so, surely there is a risk that we may be compelled to raise it to a point at which it would very considerably affect the price of the articles upon which it was imposed. If you decline to make effective the principle you have adopted you give a grievance to Canada which you cannot deny is a very real grievance indeed.

There is a real danger in this matter which ought never to be forgotten. The effect of a duty in this country is certain to be exaggerated by its opponents. Now a little incident happened last winter of which I may remind your Lordships, and that was an election in Devonshire. What happened there? The price of corn and consequently of bread had increased through the winter owing to deficient harvests—demand being greater than the supply—and to purely natural causes. These electors of Devonshire were disappointed because they had been told that His Majesty's present advisers would secure them cheap food. They promptly voted against the Government candidate, mainly because food had become dearer—although I am bound to say that no fair-minded and intelligent person would say that any action or inaction on the part of His Majesty's present Government had been the cause of the increase in the price of corn and bread last winter. But that was the result. Now if my noble friend had in the year 1905 been able to induce Parliament to impose a duty of 2s. a quarter on corn, and precisely the same thing had happened in the winter of 1907 as did happen, why, we should have had every speaker of the great Liberal Party throughout the country denouncing the Government of my noble friend for having by the imposition of a 2s. duty on corn raised the price of corn by 7s., 8s., or 10s. We know enough of electioneering in this country to know how those things are done. I cannot help thinking —though that would have been a painful subject—of the effect that might have had upon the position of the Government of my noble friend if the people of this country were being told that this duty had raised the price of corn 7s. or 8s. more a quarter, and that it was intolerable that this sort of thing should be allowed to continue for the benefit of Colonial farmers at the cost of the English working man. Now, would that have tended to improve the feelings of kindliness and goodwill in this country towards our Colonial brethen? These are two of the practical difficulties which I own that I see in the working of this policy.

But there is this to be said, and I feel it very strongly. As I have already stated, I think that the feeling of the country is tending in the direction of its adoption. I think that it is far from impossible that the next general election—which cannot be deferred beyond a certain time—may place a Government in office which will be prepared to recommend the adoption by this country of the grant of preference to our Colonies. Very well, they will have to face what a good many of those who favour us very often with eloquent and glowing perorations upon the unity of the Empire and the loyalty of our Colonies often forget. Any Government which takes this question up will have undoubtedly to face difficulties such as those which I have suggested, and others of the same kind.

If the next Government and House of Commons should adopt this policy, I hope that the representatives of this country at any conference which is called to deal with the subject will approach it, not merely with a strong feeling of sentiment which I am sure will be shared by the representatives of the Colonies, but also from the point of view of men of business. It will be so approached by the Colonial representatives. It always has been, and I think in nothing have they shown their wisdom more than in this, that although the most detailed statements have been put forward in this country by persons of high authority as to the precise way in which we should give preference to Colonial products, yet no Colonial Statesman, so far as I know, has ever reciprocated by telling us exactly what he would recommend his Colony to give if we gave the kind of preference which has been suggested here. They are perfectly right; they are wise in their generation. These things ought to be left until you come to discuss them together as such things must be discussed—as a matter of business. And if they are discussed as a matter of business, I venture to say that I do sincerely hope that no Government that accepts this policy here will ever be satisfied merely by the Colonies raising their tariffs against foreign countries without lowering them to this country. We may give something to the Colonies if they give to us something of real value; but it will be of no real value to us— nothing that can be given by the Colonies —unless their high tariffs are lowered, so that we might compete in their markets —I do not say necessarily on the same basis as that of goods manufactured in the Colonies themselves, but I do say on a basis which would admit of a great extension of exports from the Mother Country to the Colonies.

One thing more. I think all of us would agree that if there is to be a change in the policy of this country in this matter it ought to be made so that it should last. It ought only to be made, therefore, as the result of a strong sentiment and a deep and real conviction on the part of the great majority of the people of this country. That a mere fleeting party majority, returned perhaps upon grounds quite of another nature than the subject we are discussing to-night, should make such a change, and within a very short time the next House of Commons should come determined to reverse it at the earliest opportunity, would not be, in my opinion, an act of statesmanship; it would be an act almost of treason to the maintenance of those ties of affection and goodwill between the Mother Country and the Colonies which all of us desire to promote.

LORD GLANTAWE: My Lords, we have had the pleasure of listening to-day to a very effective speech from a free trader of very many years standing, and the speech delivered by the noble Viscount who has just sat down is, perhaps, the most interesting contribution to the fiscal controversy that we have heard. A tax on corn means a tax on the food of the people. Put it in any way you like, it comes to that, and that is a very dangerous element to introduce. I have carefully read the discussions which took place at the Colonial Conference of 1902 and also at the Conference of last year, and, although it is evident from them that there is a strong desire on the part both of the Mother Country and of the Colonies that some kind of preference should be given, the question of defining that preference is a most difficult one. Whatever is done, it will naturally affect the price of food, and consequently make the cost of living in this country greater.

Canada undoubtedly has very great resources, but the quantity of corn imported into this country from Canada is remarkably small as compared with that imported from other countries, and it would not by any means be sufficient to supply our needs; while Canadians are determined not to be tempted by any preference to neglect the development of their own mineral resources. And in order to develop those resources Canada, with all her profession of respect for the Mother Country and desire to place this country in a better position to trade with her, does not conceal the fact that it would be necessary to place a protective duty even as against the Mother Country upon the same basis as other countries.

Many of the manufactured articles that we import are also the raw materials of industry; and though "dumping" into this country may possibly have injured particular trades, it has, I think, been beneficial to us on the whole. That it has been beneficial has been proved over and over again in our shipping industries. We have been able to buy material for the construction of our ships at a very moderate price; and when there is a tendency on the part of particular manufacturers here to advance prices abnormally we get relief by the free import of goods from Germany or America. The prosperity of the United States and of Germany is often referred to. But those who have carefully watched the progress of these, the two most protective countries in the world, will have found that during the last twelve or eighteen months the distress among the working classes of the United States and Germany has been very much greater than among the working classes here. There are certain manufacturers in the United States who during the last twelve months have not occupied their machinery to more than 25 per cent. With all their protection, they have been reduced to producing only about one-fourth of their capacity. Yet nearly the whole of the manufacturers in this country have been working on full time.

What is the reason for that? The chief reason is that we buy in the cheapest market. We impose no tariff upon anything that we receive. Our working men get their food and all other necessaries much cheaper than in protected countries. Consequently we hold to-day the position we have held for the last century as the leading manufacturers of the world; and I have no doubt that if we continue our present policy we shall still hold that proud position. I look with great apprehension to any duty being placed upon corn. The noble Viscount who spoke last was instrumental in placing a duty upon coal. I shall not occupy your Lordships' time by going into that matter, but those who are interested in the coal trade know how prejudicial that duty was to this country. I am convinced that the prosperity of this country depends upon the maintenance of the policy which has been followed during the last half century.

In his Motion the noble Duke lays stress upon the recent changes which have been made in the tariffs of the self-governing Colonies having promoted economic development and the extension of their trade relations with the United Kingdom and foreign countries. It is questionable whether that development will be altogether to our advantage. Certainly it will not be so at first, and if the Colonies carry out their present purpose we may find the same inconvenience to our trade as we did in the case of the United States when the McKinley Tariff was put on. There is no doubt, in my opinion, that free trade is the best and most advantageous policy for this country, and I trust that by never receding from it we shall retain our present proud position of being the leading manufacturing nation of the world.

*LORD CURZON OF KEDLESTON: My Lords, I was prevented by another engagement from being present in your Lordships' House yesterday, and I had not intended to take any part in this debate; but, reading the report of the discussion, I observed that so many references were made to the position of the Government of India during the time that I was Viceroy, and attention has been so pointedly drawn to the despatch of the Government of India of 22nd October, 1903, for which I was in the main responsible, that I feel in duty bound to invite your Lordships' consideration to a few observations on the subject.

The noble Viscount, Lord Milner, whom I am sorry not to see in his place, was not justified last night in remarking that Sir Edward Law, the Finance Minister of the Government of India in my time, took a different view of the fiscal question and the position of the Government of India from the remainder of his colleagues. I remember very well the discussions which resulted in that despatch, and the conclusions were unanimous. On referring to my papers this morning I find that the despatch itself had the great advantage of being revised and corrected and much improved by the hand of Sir Edward Law himself, and in the introduction which he has just contributed to the excellent book by Mr. Webb I find that he concludes by citing with complete agreement the concluding passages in the despatch to which I have referred.

What was our position in India in writing that despatch? We had no objection in principle to a system of preferential tariffs; but after making the most careful examination of the trade of India, both with Great Britain and with foreign countries, we came to the conclusion, in which Sir Edward Law himself concurred, that India had not very much to gain, though she might possibly have something to gain, by such arrangement; but that, whatever she might gain, there were certain risks extending over the larger field of finance which it was conceivable she might incur, and which it was desirable in every interest that she should avoid. We were not averse at all from fiscal retaliation in defence of Indian interests. That, I think, is clear from the concluding paragraph of the despatch, and still more clear from the action taken by the Government of India during the time when I was connected with it.

Your Lordships may remember that in 1899 we did put by legislation in India, with the consent of the Secretary of State here, a countervailing duty on sugar in order to check the great imports into India of foreign sugar encouraged by foreign bounties. Then, again, a little later on I remember a case when the Russian Government suddenly enhanced the already exorbitant duty it was imposing on Indian tea. We at once retaliated by proposing to His Majesty's Government that we should place a differential duty on Russian petroleum. These two cases are symptomatic of the view taken by the Government of India at that time upon the policy of retaliation as a weapon of fiscal action. We desired in writing that despatch to retain the free hand which we enjoyed under the existing system, and we were very much afraid that in any change we might be called upon to forfeit that advantage, by having to accord equal treatment to the imports of foreign countries.

I think that in speaking just now of Sir Edward Law, I should qualify what I said by observing that he was not so strongly convinced as the remainder of us about the power of retaliation enjoyed by foreign countries, or as to the degree to which they would exercise it in the event of any change; but we were all absolutely agreed as to the supreme importance of the necessity of maintaining the balance of trade in favour of India, and still more of maintaining the stability of our rupee currency, which had so recently been established on a firm basis.

May I confess that our real apprehensions, when drawing up the despatch, about the fiscal future of India, were not so much economic as political? We said to ourselves, "What guarantee should we have, if any new system were proposed, that India would have free speech in the discussion of the subject or a free judgment in its decision?" I believe that Mr. Chamberlain's idea, when first he put forward his scheme of fiscal reform, was that in the Conference which he no doubt contemplated should precede any active steps, India should be treated as a self-governing Colony, and that through the mouth of her representatives she should indicate the degree to which it would be to her advantage to take part in any fiscal change, and that except with the consent of her representatives no such scheme should be forced on her. That at once raised the question, who and where are the representatives of India? Your Lordships know perfectly well that outside the Government of India itself, there is no organisation existing, or capable of being created, that could be considered as representing the opinion of the people of India at large. The Government of India does its best, and, I think, with a tolerable measure of success, to represent what it regards as the views and interests of the great country committed to its charge; but I do not know that the Government of India can fairly be said to represent India in any strict sense of the term. It has often occurred to me that with a continent of such an enormous size, and with such a huge complexity of population and diversity of interest, it is inconceivable that any organisation or association, European or native, should ever exist that could be fairly called representative of the whole of India.

As I have said, I believe the Government of India does its best to represent India, but it is not independent. Its degree of independence is extremely limited and it is limited by the Constitution of this country. The Government of India, after all, is an agent appointed by His Majesty's Government at home to govern India, and from them it takes its orders, through them it receives its payment, and the real master of India, the only man who has the right in the last resort to speak for India, is the Secretary of State, who is always a politician in this country. What has been our experience in the past in India of the manner in which the influence and power of the Secretary of State, as the ultimate ruler of India, are exerted in the direction of the fiscal policy of India? It is that in fiscal matters the Government of India has to take the views of the Secretary of State, whether it agrees with them or not; and those views are more likely to be guided and shaped by English than by purely Indian considerations.

Let me demonstrate this proposition. Your Lordships will remember that after India was taken over by the Crown for many years there was maintained a system of import duties. In 1879, when that system was abolished, when under the auspices of Lord Salisbury India was instructed, largely owing to pressure from Lancashire, to introduce a free trade system, and Lord Lytton, the Viceroy, was instructed to abolish the cotton duties in India, he only succeeded in doing so by over-ruling the majority of his council in India—the single time within the last forty or fifty years that such action has been taken. Again in 1894, when the tariff in India was re-introduced in consequence of the extreme financial depression from which India was then suffering, and when at first cotton manufactures were exempted altogether from the import duty—in December of that year, in consequence of the very strong feeling aroused in India, the noble Viscount opposite (Lord Wolverhampton), who was then Secretary of State, and who made a most valiant speech in the House of Commons in defence of India—a speech which will linger in the memory of all who were fortunate enough to hear it—consented to the reimposition of the cotton duties there.

But, in deference to English agitation, he insisted on a corresponding Excise duty of 5 per cent. being imposed on Indian cotton manufactures. Still, however, Lancashire was not satisfied, and in 1896 the import duties on foreign cotton goods were reduced from 5 to 3½ per cent., and the corresponding Excise duty was put at an equivalent figure. On all these occasions it was not the Indian point of view that prevailed or the views of the Indian Government that were accepted by this country. It was the English point of view, largely affected by Lancashire considerations.

I think it would be true, therefore, to say that the fiscal policy of India during the last thirty or forty years has been shaped far more in Manchester than in Calcutta; and if that is the case I leave the House to understand how in viewing this question of fiscal reform and the participation which India might be called on to bear in it, we were a little nervous as to the degree of liberty that might be conceded to her. It is because of the complete dependence of India on the home Government, and because she neither enjoys nor, apparently, is likely to be given, any of the powers of a self-governing Colony; it is because she might have to accept at the hands of the Government in England, be it Liberal or Conservative, a system with which she herself was not in sympathy, that India has been so much afraid of any proposal to sacrifice or surrender the degree of fiscal autonomy she at present enjoys.

If we could understand that in any Imperial Conference which takes place the interests of India would be fairly considered; if a pledge could be given that no system will be forced on her in deference to pressure from England, or from any part of England, which is not suited to her own interests, and that she will not be called upon to accept any system devised exclusively in the interests of England, and that in the event of no such solution being found practicable she will be left in the enjoyment of the degree of fiscal liberty which she now enjoys, then I believe that India, so far as I have any right to speak on her behalf, would gladly join in any such Conference as I have spoken of, and that she would welcome any practical scheme of fiscal reform embracing preferential tariffs within the Empire, because she is already in favour of the main principles which underlie that reform, and because in the respects to which I have referred she has already put into practical operation some of the most effective means of carrying those principles into effect.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, according to the unwritten law of the House the noble Earl opposite is entitled to the last word, and I therefore rise before him to address myself for a few moments to the subject before you Lordships. After the weighty speeches to which we have listened I feel that there is not very much that I can add to this discussion, but there are, I think, some points which have not received sufficient attention, and upon which I hope we shall elicit further information from His Majesty's Government.

Our position, I take it, is this. We are all in favour of maintaining the closest possible relations with our great Colonies, and we on this side give absolute credit to noble Lords opposite for holding that view with a sincerity equal to our own. We are all ready—at all events in theory—to sacrifice something to maintain and improve those relations; but I think that the difference between us is this, that when we come to practice we—on this side of the House—are ready to risk something, to make an effort, to make sacrifices, in order to bring about these improved relations; whereas, so far as I am able to understand the views of noble Lords opposite, they are not only unwilling to risk a farthing for the purpose, but they are not willing to risk even a troublesome discussion. It is worth while to consider for a moment how our Colonial Empire fares under this dispensation.

It is admitted on all sides that some of our great Colonies have given us valuable preference. I think one or two of the speakers in this debate have been inclined to minimise that preference, but I find it difficult to suppose that the noble Lord opposite will do so, for I find that in the course of the debates at the last Conference his colleague the present Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to "the substantial concessions" we had received as having been of "enormous benefit," and of a kind for which we ought to be grateful; and I venture to say that statistics which I will not repeat—they have already been given—confirm that view. The Chancellor of the Exchequer spoke indeed of the marked effect upon our trade of these colonial concessions. Well, it must be one thing or the other—either they are or they are not valuable; if they are not, we need say no more about them, but I assume that it is agreed that these concessions are of substantial value.

Then we come to the Conference, at the end of which Sir William Lyne moved the resolution which was supported by the whole of the Colonial representatives but met with no support from His Majesty's Government. Indeed, the present Prime Minister took credit to himself for having, as he put it, bluntly and frankly placed his own view before the members of the Conference, a view which, in the language of my noble friend Lord St. Aldwyn, may be described as a merely negative view. The position assumed by the representatives of His Majesty's Government was a two-fold one. They held that Colonial Conferences were bad and dangerous things in themselves; they held also that they themselves had no mandate from the people of this country to entertain any proposals of the kind, and that they were, therefore, incompetent to discuss them. It may be, and recent events suggest it, that, after all, the country has not said its last word on the subject of Colonial preference. In our view, however, the refusal of the representatives of the Government even to discuss this question of Colonial preference was an act of discourtesy, and more than that, a political blunder of great magnitude.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Lord TWEEDMOUTH): Oh, oh!

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: I adhere to my words, a very great blunder, and I say when a proposal of that kind was made by the representatives of the great Colonies common courtesy required that their suggestions should be attentively considered and fully discussed. Not only did our representatives refuse to discuss the Colonial proposal, but they gave a very broad hint to the Colonies that it was our intention in this great fiscal question to go our own way, and that we expected the Colonies to go theirs. Well, the Colonies have now begun to travel their own road, a road that may carry them very far, and this Franco-Canadian Convention, to which the noble Duke behind me has called attention, may be regarded as marking the first stage in the Colonial journey.

One word on the point to which my noble friend has referred, the manner in which the Convention was negotiated. We are unfortunately very imperfectly supplied with information on this point, but the Secretary of State for the Colonies will, no doubt, give us more. There has arisen, especially in Canada, an impression that these negotiations mark an entirely new departure in regard to these great Colonial transactions. It has always been the custom—a very wise and proper custom—to associate representatives of Colonial Governments with representatives of His Majesty's Government whenever these negotiations take place involving Colonial interests. The principles which have always been followed are clearly set out in a despatch of which my noble friend Lord Ripon was the author, and which bears the date of 20th June, 1895. The noble Marquess then wrote as follows—

> "To give the Colonies power of negotiating treaties for themselves without reference to Her Majesty's Government would be to give them an international *status* as separate and Sovereign States, a result which Her Majesty's Government are satisfied would be injurious equally to the Colonies and to the Mother Country and would be desired by neither. The negotiations then being between Her Majesty and the sovereign of the foreign State must be conducted by Her Majesty's representative at the Court of the foreign Power, who would keep Her Majesty's Government informed of the progress of the discussion and seek instructions from them as necessity arose."

That has always seemed to me to be the sound and accepted doctrine which governed proceedings of this kind. But I see that this despatch was quoted in the Canadian Parliament by Mr. Brodeur, the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, who made the following comments upon it—

> "It is enunciated very clearly there (in Lord Ripon's despatch) that the negotiations should be carried out by the British Ambassador. That was the position taken in that despatch of 1895. Now what is the situation to-day? I have in my hand the instructions which were given on the 4th July, 1907, by Sir Edward Grey to the British Ambassador or his representative in Paris concerning the negotiations for this treaty under discussion. I may say that by command of His Excellency, and with the authorisation of the Imperial authorities, I lay this despatch before Parliament. It sets forth, in the clearest manner, the situation, and shows that now, for the first time in Canadian history, negotiations for a commercial treaty were carried out exclusively by Canadian representatives."

I do not know whether I am right in supposing that these proceedings do amount to a new departure. I hope we shall have a word of explanation from the Secretary of State. I hope he will see his way to comply with the request of the noble Duke and lay upon the Table at any rate any Papers of which the Canadian Government have been allowed to make use.

What is the effect of the Convention? Canada, as your Lordships are aware, has, besides the surtax, three tariffs—the general tariff, the preferential tariff, and the intermediate tariff, which was framed for the purpose of enabling the Canadian Government to negotiate advantageously with friendly countries. It was always understood that that intermediate tariff still left a substantial preference to the Mother Country, that the Mother Country, as it were, kept her distance. Now, what has happened in this case? In the course of negotiations with the French Government Canada has had to yield considerably more than the intermediate tariff, with the result that, roughly speaking, the whole of the preference given to this country has disappeared. I think there are some miserable shreds representing about 2½ per cent. that remain of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer described as an enormous benefit to British trade. That is a somewhat disquieting result, but what makes it still more serious in the view of many of us is this. Not only does the Convention extend to the whole French Empire, but to every country which under existing treaties is entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment at the hands of the Dominion. As noble Lords are aware, some twenty Powers are entitled to such treatment, Powers by no means unimportant, for amongst them are Austria, Russia, Denmark, Switzerland, and others. That is, as I understand, the immediate effect of the Convention; but let us consider what the remoter effects are likely to be. We are virtually inviting these great Colonies to go as they please in these commercial matters. Is it not clear that Canada is likely to make similar conventions with other Powers, and is it not also reasonable to anticipate that other British Colonies will follow the example of Canada and make mutually advantageous bargains with other foreign Powers?

Not only so; you may have agreements between one Colony and another. What is to be the end of all this? Is it not fair to anticipate that before long the whole area will be covered by a network of these international and intercolonial conventions, so effectually, that should we at some future time desire to make advantageous bargains between the Mother Country and the Colonies, there will be no room, because the whole of the ground will have been covered? I think we are entitled to ask whether we are correct in so interpreting the consequences of the Franco-Canadian Convention; and whether, if the facts are as I have stated them, the Secretary for the Colonies regards this position with equanimity. I own that it fills me with feelings of considerable alarm and apprehension.

The noble Earl may tell us that everything is going well, that this country is very rich, that trade is prospering, and that no change is wanted. But is it quite clear that there is no reason for misgiving as to our prospects? I noticed a remarkable statement made by a supporter of the noble Earl on the occasion when Mr. Asquith for the first time met his party as Prime Minister. Sir John Brunner, who presided at that meeting, asked permission as a man of business to tender what he called a piece of hard practical advice to the Government. "He wished," he said, "to advise the Government to give up that part of the policy of the Manchester school which was called *laissez faire.*" I understand it has since been suggested that Sir John Brunner was thinking of such things as railway, telegraph, and steamboat subsidies. I am not aware that the Manchester school ever opposed enterprises of that kind. But it is the case that at the Conference the only expression of sympathy that came from the British representatives was a sort of vague suggestion that something might be done in the way of steamship subsidies and of new lines of telegraph and improved railway communication. But are we not entitled to ask what is the use of offering new facilities for trade if, at the same time, you allow the trade itself to be cut off altogether from you by international agreements of this kind? You may widen the channels as much as you please, but if there is no stream of trade to flow through them you will not greatly gain by such improvements. It is admitted—my noble friend Lord St. Aldwyn admitted it, not, perhaps without a tone of regret—that there is throughout the country a general and growing desire for improving our commerce with the Colonies.

VISCOUNT ST. ALDWYN: I do not regret that at all.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: Are we, then, so very helpless to do anything to improve these Colonial trade transactions? We have been told in this debate of the difficulties which stand in the way. We have been warned of the great difficulty created by the case of India. Lord Wolverhampton, whom we all rejoice to see sitting in this House, warned us in solemn terms of the risk we should run if we did anything which might affect the position of India, which he properly described as a great producing and as a debtor country. I venture to express my humble agreement with what was said by the noble Lord. But I think his warning would have been more appropriate if he had been able to show us that we were proposing anything which was really calculated to interfere with the export business of India or with her ability as a debtor country to meet her obligations. I would have nothing to say to any system of Imperial preference which might have the effect of jeopardising the position of India in that respect. But although I hold that feeling strongly, I am not able to admit that there is no room for improvement in the conditions under which the trade of India is carried on.

It is rather a remarkable thing that of the immense export trade of India this country claims a very much smaller proportion than we used to claim twenty years ago. In 1885–1886, 63 per cent. of the total export trade of India was taken by this country, whereas in 1905–1906 we took only a little more than 46 per cent. In other words, twenty years ago we had considerably more than half and at this moment we have considerably less than half of the export trade of India. It does not seem to me to be by any means established that a system of preference would necessarily be injurious to the Indian export trade. We cannot sufficiently bear in mind what was pointed out by Lord Milner last night—that Indian exports are very severely taxed by the protectionist countries with which India deals, and that if she enjoys any immunities or advantages at their hand she enjoys them not because of any affection they bear her, but because of motives of self-interest: in my opinion, these motives of self-interest would continue to prevail in these foreign countries under any system of preference to which we are at all likely to resort. These countries take from India a number of commodities, principally raw materials, which are absolutely essential to them, and consequently it is highly improbable that under a system of preference India would find all these countries simultaneously closing their doors in her face I am, therefore, not very much moved by the apprehension that the export trade of India would be likely to suffer under a system of preferential dealing with the Mother Country.

I had intended to say something with regard to the views of the Government of India on this question, but my noble friend Lord Curzon has relieved me of the necessity of doing so. He has made it abundantly clear that it is entirely wrong to represent the Government of India as opposed to all idea of preference or retaliation. What the Government of India apprehended was that India might find herself, without sufficient consultation, entangled in some new Imperial arrangement entirely unsuited to her requirements; but it seems to me evident, both from the famous despatch of Lord Curzon in 1903 and from Sir Edward Law's statement, that India has no sort of objection to discuss the possibility of a system of preference in which her interests are adequately provided for.

My noble friend Lord Cromer dwelt last night upon the practical inconveniences which attend the operation of what he called a scientific tariff in which a great number of articles are comprised; and he was able to import into the discussion of a somewhat dry subject an element of humour which greatly delighted the House. I certainly should not attempt to contend that a long tariff containing a great number of articles would not give rise to more book-keeping and to more trouble, risk, and confusion than a simple tariff dealing with the taxation of a smaller number of commodities; but I do say that these are not the kind of difficulties which ought to deter us from even discussing the possibility of measures which might have the effect of drawing the different parts of the Empire more closely together.

Then we are frequently told that it is useless to attempt to bring about freer trade within the Empire, because all our great Colonies are frankly protectionist. I admit that our great Colonies are frankly protectionist; and I believe the protection of their own industries will be the consideration which will always rank most prominently in their minds. But that does not in the least diminish my belief in the possibility of coming to an advantageous arrangement with these Colonies. The simile which is frequently used when this part of the question is discussed is the simile of the wall. We are told that the Colonies have built up a tariff wall, and that if it is high enough to exclude British imports it does not very much matter to us whether the wall which divides us from the Colonies is a little bit lower than the wall which divides foreign countries from the Colonies. I am not sure that a fallacy does not lurk at the bottom of that argument. I think it would be a convincing argument if these great Colonies were self-supporting, if they could surround themselves with a ring fence, and draw everything they required from their own possessions. But they cannot produce everything they require. They must import from somewhere and the imports will come in wherever the wall is lowest. If, therefore, the wall is made two or three bricks lower where our imports come in, then I believe our imports will come in, and we shall gain relatively to other and competing Powers.

I will only say one word upon the much-discussed question of the possibility of a system of preference under the existing tariff. I agree with those who believe that in the British tariff as we know it there is little room for a preference to the Colonies. But I am firmly convinced of the truth of what I think was said by Lord Ridley when he told the House that there is in this country a strong movement of opinion in favour of a fundamental revision of our present tariff. I believe that Lord Cromer only spoke the truth last night when he pointed out that His Majesty's present advisers have driven the longest nail into the coffin of the present tariff by the financial arrangements which they have this year announced. It is the reckless commitments into which the Government have entered—commitments the extent of some of which we are able even now to foresee with clearness—it is these commitments which, in my belief, will beyond all question before long compel a reconsideration of the tariff to which we have been accustomed. When that time comes we shall be in a better position to offer reciprocal advantages to the Colonies.

And I hope the time will come when we shall be able to go again to those great dominions which at five consecutive conferences have asked us to meet them with regard to this question of preferential trade, and when we shall endeavour, at all events, to discover some means of meeting their wishes. That there are difficulties in the way I should be the last person in the world to deny—the difficulties are enormous, they may be insuperable, but I should like to see an honest attempt made to face them and to overcome them.

What I most regret is that His Majesty's Government, by their recent action in dealing with the Colonies and by the manner in which they repelled the advances of the Colonial representatives at the Conference of 1907, have driven the Colonies to think of something other than preference between the Mother Country and themselves, and to make arrangements with foreign countries which may render it impossible for us by-and-bye to effect mutually advantageous bargains between ourselves and them. The present Government could not, in my opinion, have left to their successors a legacy more detrimental to the interests of the British Empire.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, I need hardly say that we on this side of the House have no complaint whatever to make against the noble Duke for having placed this Motion upon the Paper; and for two reasons. In the first place it has led to one of those debates which, in these later days, which have been mainly given up to the ordinary cut and thrust of party controversy, have become only too rare—I mean one of those more set and formal debates, which used to be more frequent, when the House of Lords brings up its reserves; and I think that those outside the House do not always quite appreciate how powerful and distinguished those reserves are. In the second place, we frankly admit that if the noble Duke and his friends are not prepared to accept as final the undoubted verdict of the country given at the last general election in opposition to a fundamental change in our fiscal policy, and, in especial, to a tax upon food, they are, of course, entirely within their rights in bringing on a discussion such as we have had during the past two days. From a discussion of this kind I am bound to say we have nothing to fear.

The debate has ranged over a considerable extent of ground, but I think it is clear, both from the speech of the noble Marquess who has just sat down and from the speech of the noble Duke, that what I may call the *causa causans* of this discussion was the Franco-Canadian Treaty.

There is nothing new about agreements of this kind. In 1893 Sir Charles Tupper negotiated a commercial Convention between Canada and France, far less favourable to Canada than this was, but still it was a convention of the same kind. Then followed what is a closer precedent for the action criticised by noble Lords opposite. In 1902, after the Colonial Conference met here, the Canadian Ministers, with, so far as I am aware, the complete sanction and agreement of Mr. Chamberlain, went over to Paris in order to try to get better terms than Canada possessed under the Convention of 1893; and I am not aware that there was any difference between what occurred then and last year, except the very important difference that in 1902 the Canadian Ministers were not successful in obtaining any change in the treaty.

With regard to this later Convention, there seems to be an opinion that something passed between the Foreign Office, and I suppose the Colonial Office, and the Canadian Government which involved an entirely new set of propositions. All that passed between the Canadian Government and the Foreign Office is contained in this small book which was laid upon the Table of the Canadian Parliament, and I think some misconception appears to have arisen over it. Sir Francis Bertie, our Ambassador, was associated with the two Canadian Ministers who conducted the discussion, though of course, the technical part of the discussion was entirely carried on by them. But during the whole period we were kept informed of the progress of the negotiations, and that, I think, is as much as we could reasonably expect.

The document which, I think, seems to have misled the noble Duke was a letter addressed by Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Fielding. It is dated 28th August last year, and in it Sir Edward Grey expresses his gratification at learning that progress was being made with the negotiations, and he added—

> "On receipt of the draft treaty, which you hope shortly to be able to transmit, I will submit it to the Colonial Office. It must also be shown to the Board of Trade. I will request the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the President of the Board of Trade to

expedite matters, and as soon as their approval is received full powers will be sent you."

I think the noble Duke must have been misled by that letter. All that was intended by the words "full powers" was that for the purpose of the actual signature to the convention Mr. Fielding had to be declared a plenipotentiary. That is all that passed, and there is nothing novel in it. It is perfectly true that under this convention the French Government obtain the advantage in certain respects of what is known as the intermediate tariff. The three tariffs have been explained by former speakers, so I need not go into them; but there are, in a sense, more than three tariffs, not merely because of the surtax upon German goods, but because, under certain circumstances, special advantages are given for particular goods.

What France gets on this occasion is part of the intermediate tariff, and, of course, it is perfectly clear, and it cannot be denied, that *pro tanto* the value of our preference is diminished by that fact. It is also true that under the most-favoured-nation treaties certain other countries obtain a similiar advantage; and it appears to have been supposed, I think by the noble Viscount, Lord Milner, who is not in his place but who courteously took the trouble to inform me that he had been called away by a public engagement, that we ought to have informed Canada beforehand of the fact that, under the most-favoured-nation treaties, other countries would be placed in the same position as France. Of course Canada knew that fact perfectly well before she entered into the Convention, and it seems to me almost incredible that anybody could have supposed that she did not.

I do not think I need trouble the House at this hour with any long account of the countries included. The countries from which a considerable amount of dutiable goods will gain preference under this Convention are Switzerland, and, to some extent, Japan. I do not think I need trouble your Lordships with the figures, but the total effect of the preference is that it affects only 5 per cent. of the total dutiable imports into Canada, and only 3 per cent. of the total imports of the country. It is true that there are a few cases, particularly those of lace, and, to a certain extent also, silk ribbons, in which the value of the preference is lost to British goods. I regret that it should be so. It is unfortunate, no doubt, from our point of view that the Canadians did not find themselves able—I do not know whether they will be able to do so on a future occasion—to maintain the preference for these particular goods. But even noble Lords who are strong supporters of tariff reform must agree that we could not properly be asked to change our entire fiscal system on account of one or two articles of that kind.

Perhaps I may be allowed to quote what was said by Mr. Fielding, the Canadian Minister, as to the spirit which had actuated the Canadian Government in making this Convention. On 19th January of this year Mr. Fielding said that the policy of the Canadian Government was—

> "To keep as far as possible for British trade the degree of preference established by the tariff policy of last session (1907)."

and—

> "In the granting of any special rates which might be thought desirable, to confine them as far as possible to French specialities which would not be likely to come into competition to any large degree with British industries."

In the case of wine, for instance, which is largely affected by this Convention, there is no competition with us.

I would point out that we cannot prevent these agreements being made even if we would. There have been occasions when agreements of a very marked character have been made. In 1902 what is known as the Bond-Hay Treaty was negotiated between Newfoundland and the United States. Newfoundland is a Colony which gives us no preference. That treaty provided that special articles exported by Newfoundland, such as cod-fish, whale oil, and whale bone, ores and metals and slates, should be admitted into the United States free of duty, and in return Newfoundland admitted duty free from the United States agricultural implements, machinery imported by agricultural societies, gas engines, printing presses, and a number of other articles. I make no complaint of the action of Newfoundland in that matter, but that treaty, if it had been carried into effect, owing to the proximity of the United States, would have had the effect of giving undue preference to the United States as against this country. Provided that no discrimination is exercised against any part of the Empire—that is to say, that no preference is given to any foreign country over any part of the Empire, and provided also that we are kept thoroughly informed of such negotiations as may take place, in order that we may be able to make representations on behalf of particular trades, we do not attempt to interfere with these special commercial agreements. On the other hand, when we make commercial treaties of our own the Dominions are not included unless they specially desire to be so, in order that they may be able to maintain their fiscal independence.

It is also important to point out that in the Franco-Canadian treaty we do gain materially in several ways. Article VIII. lays down that French goods will only enjoy the concession if they come by the port of some country which receives either the preferential or the intermediate tariff. That is a pure advantage to this country. Then, again, in Article XV. there is the recognition in Canada of the certificates of chambers of commerce as to value in cases where *ad valorem* duty is charged. The noble Duke's general argument points to this —that, if you allow these Conventions to take place, gradually your preference will be whittled away altogether. I think that is also the argument of the noble Marquess. There is more than one answer to that. I have quoted the words of Mr. Fielding. I think it is evident that in making these conventions the representatives of the different Dominions will desire to affect preference given to us as little as possible. But I also have the support of one of the arguments of the noble Viscount opposite, Lord St. Aldwyn, who, if he will forgive my temerity in venturing to pay him a compliment, gave us what, I venture to say, was one of the most remarkable specimens of reasoned eloquence to which we have had the pleasure of listening in this House for some time. The noble Duke and the noble Viscount on the cross benches seemed to be under the impression that the existence of an intermediate tariff had something to do with the Franco-Canadian Convention. There is not the slightest relation between the two things. The intermediate tariff was initiated before the Franco-Canadian Convention was contemplated.

It is evident, too, that when a country engages in a system of preference, it must have at least three tariffs if the power of retaliation is not to disappear. If you are to have a preferential tariff for your own Empire, unless you are entirely to abandon the power of bargaining with all foreign countries, you must have a general tariff, and also an intermediate tariff, and, accordingly as you are treated by those foreign countries, so they get, or do not get, the benefit of the better terms of the intermediate tariff. That, surely, is the essence of what is known in the phrase of the noble Marquess opposite as the policy of the loaded revolver. If the revolver has its effect and the hostile country climbs down, you must give it some advantage for doing so. Therefore, I am led to conclude that, in whatever system of preference we may engage, or the Colonies may engage, there will always remain, not merely the possibility, but the certainty of these commercial conventions being made with foreign Powers; and if our great Colonies undertake them, they will be bound to consider first and foremost what their own particulars interests are.

I do not wish at this hour to describe the existing preferences, to which allusion has been made, but I do heartily concur in what has been said on the other side of the House on the subject. We most distinctly appreciate these preferences, and we quite admit the value which they have been to British trade. That was frankly admitted by Mr. Lloyd-George at the Conference, and I entirely endorse what he said there. Even in regard to the Australian tariff, which in its first form was of rather an alarming character, because it made the position of some British commodities worse than before, we recognise that the representations of our commercial bodies as regards particular articles have been met in a friendly spirit by the Australian Government.

I should like to ask what really is the governing principle on which all these preferences are given, and to do that I must turn again to the Imperial Conference. The argument at that Conference was carried on, I think on both sides, with skill and dignity. I was sorry to hear the noble Marquess use the phrase "discourteous" in relation to the attitude of those who acted as plenipotentiaries for the Government. What I suppose the noble Marquess meant was that their refusal to enter into the details of an actual preferential arrangement was discourteous to the Colonial Governments. I do not believe they so regarded it. We certainly did not refuse to discuss the matter, for it was discussed at the fullest possible length. I do not admit that it was discourteous to refuse to accept the general proposition of the Colonies. It was absolutely impossible, having regard to the verdict of the constituencies and to our own known opinions on the matter, to go into the details of a scheme which, whatever it might be, we were debarred from accepting; but I think I can say, with the utmost truth, that it was a very real matter of regret to both of my right hon. friends who represented us there that there should be this strong and fundamental difference of opinion between the Colonies and ourselves on this matter.

I would like to quote a passage from the very remarkable speech of Mr. Deakin on this subject. It was felicitous in phrase and substantial in argument, like all the speeches of Mr. Deakin, to some of which many of us have had the pleasure of listening. On the general principle of colonial preference Mr. Deakin said—

"It is not for us to propose a new or criticise your present fiscal policy, but we may remark that consideration for your own British industries might lead to duties being levied, the object of which would be either to revive those industries which had suffered or were suffering, or to expand those already existing. That involves another set of principles altogether, and I should be distinctly departing from the rule laid down for myself if I entered upon any discussion of the merits or demerits of local protection. It ought to be clearly understood that my reason for mentioning it is this—that when the outer dominions suggest a preference, they not only believe that you should have that opportunity of profit, but also that in considering any proposal for preference to them the first obligation upon every British Parliament is to consider its own citizens, its own industries, and its own advantage first. So far as you might think it right to exclude us and everyone else from your own markets in order to maintain, or retain, or extend any kind of production or interest of your own, it would be impossible for us to raise one word of complaint. That is entirely a matter for the discretion of the people and the Parliament of Great Britain. May I be forgiven for even mentioning this truism, because it occasionally is inferred that the attitude we adopt is of another character—that we are looking for the same sort of eleemosynary aid which is to be given in consideration of our youth and inexperience. We may be youthful, but in this matter we are fairly experienced. In our own tariffs we distinctly study our own interests, and hold that the same duty rests as seriously upon the Government and representatives of the people of this country as it does upon us."

That appears to point to a fact which, I think, is not entirely recognised here. When Mr. Deakin and Sir W. Lyne were speaking they were speaking as protectionists who were filled with a certain feeling of astonishment that we were not prepared to adopt a protective system with all the advantages that they conceived it would confer on this country. It certainly seems to me that they expected—and I confess there I am entirely in agreement with them—that if you adopt a system of Colonial preference you only can do it as part of a protective system. The two things go absolutely together. No attempt has ever been made to combine free trade with preference, so far as I know, and we believe the thing to be an impossibility.

I do not desire to enter upon the whole question of protective duties; I am not going to enter into the difficulties which would surround a policy of mere retaliation; neither do I propose to enter into the Parliamentary objections, very strong as they are, to greatly increasing the power of particular trades and their consequent influence upon the fiscal policy of the country. These are all matters which have been dealt with on a hundred platforms, and I do not propose to deal with them now. But I should like to say a word more in addition to what has already been said as to the actual and practical difficulties of entering upon a policy of preference. I do not desire, however, again to traverse the familiar ground as regards the question of the possible acceptance of food taxes in this country. The prime difficulties of that policy were dealt with by the noble Viscount, Lord St. Aldwyn, in a far more perfect manner than I could hope to do. But I should like to draw attention to the intense intricacy of any system of preferential tariffs which is to be fair to the whole Empire at large. It is obvious that unless you are prepared to tax some raw materials you must practically omit some of your Colonies altogether from preference. Then you have the almost unanswerable question as to what are raw materials. Take, for instance, the case of hops. Are hops raw materials? Supposing the hop invasion, of which so much complaint has been made, came from Ontario, where some hops are grown, instead of coming from California, what steps would the noble Duke take to deal with it? Would he be content to see the hop industry of England entirely destroyed by hops from some part of the Empire, or would he desire to place a 40s. duty on them?

If I might quote a shorter passage from Mr. Deakin, I should like to draw attention to one aspect of this question of Colonial preference which has not been sufficiently noticed. It is this. You cannot imagine that it would be possible to give the same preference to all the Colonies for the same article. At least, if you attempted to do that you would be causing almost as great a feeling of discontent in certain cases as if you left them out altogether. Mr. Deakin at the Colonial Conference said—

> "The import of cheese into Great Britain, which is almost entirely in the hands of Canada, amounts to £6,350,000, to which Australia contributes to the extent of £1,000 only. Here, again, is an opening for trade which preferential treatment would greatly widen."

The meaning of that, of course, is that Australia is to have a preference over Canada in the import of cheese. If you let in Australian cheese free you must have a somewhat higher tariff for Canadian cheese—high enough to enable Australia to compete. At least, if not, you will leave Australia as it is. Over and above that you must have an intermediate tariff for the countries willing to meet you on other points, and you must have a general tariff almost of a prohibitory character against the world at large. And that has a bearing, I think, on what was said by the noble Viscount in a different connection—the extreme difficulty of keeping these food duties low, for the more tariffs you have the higher your duties must be; and that is quite apart from the point the noble Viscount made, as I thought, with unanswerable force, as to what would happen if your preference does not have the effect which you hope it will have. That is a point which cannot be mentioned too often. If your 2s. duty does not avail, are you going to put on a 5s. duty?

Then we have the further question of the extent to which we are ourselves prepared to impose duties against Colonial imports. You will find that when you have once started on this path of putting on duties for other purposes than revenue this country will, having tasted blood so to speak, acquire the zest for protection which is, as we know, very easily acquired, and you will find, I feel certain, that if some industry here which may be protected against foreign competition is in danger of being swamped by Colonial competition, you will undoubtedly do what Mr. Deakin anticipated, and what he fully approved of your doing—that is, impose a duty for protective purposes against your very Colonies themselves. And how that state of things would lead to anything approaching free trade within the Empire I am unable to see. When the question was asked in the House of Commons Mr. Balfour indignantly repudiated the idea that under any circumstances we should ever think of imposing a duty against the Colonies. He adopted almost the tone which a fond mother might adopt if she were asked if she were going to borrow money from her daughter's dress allowance. That is not the way in which the Colonies desire to be treated. They wish to be treated, as Mr. Deakin explained, as nations entirely competent to conduct their own affairs, and they do not desire us to take anything of a patronising view towards them, either in this matter or in any other. Then there was the point whether it would have been possible for us to give a preference which would not have involved protection. That was dealt with also by the noble Viscount. I think it must be agreed that the real value which anybody would have placed upon such a preference would have been that it meant the abandonment of our principle, and that it would have afforded an almost irresistible lever to the suggestion from some colony which did not get that particular advantage that they themselves should in turn become the recipients of a preference which would involve something like a protective duty here.

I pass to the question of India. In the Indian case there are two difficulties. There is the difficulty as to how you are going to protect India from being retaliated against by other countries in respect of commercial changes which may be of advantage to England but which are of no advantage to India. That point has been fully dealt with by Lord Curzon. But there is another fear which comes even more home to us here, and that is that if we set out on this career of preference India may be in a position to force a new system on us, or rather, to engage in a new system to our detriment. If we abandon the position of free trade, I confess I do not see how and in what case you could possibly refuse to permit India to place on duties even against our own commodities. In 1875 when the late Lord Salisbury was Secretary of State for India he wrote, with reference to the 5 per cent. cotton duty—

> "It is impossible to believe that under these conditions the duty can be permanently maintained. The entire acceptance of the system of free trade by England is incompatible with the continuance of an exception apparently so marked. Parliament, when its attention is drawn to the matter, will not allow the only remnant of protection within the direct jurisdiction of the English Government to be a protective duty, which, so far as it operates at all, is hostile to English manufactures."

When you abandon that powerful argument of Lord Salisbury, I do not know what argument you can substitute for it. I confess that I think that Lord Curzon, speaking as he does in this House as a representative of India, overrated the extent to which the interests of India have been sacrificed to those of this country in the past. It is perfectly true that to a certain extent we have safeguarded ourselves, but I should be sorry if it went out, as the opinion of this House, that our past fiscal policy towards India had been one of pure-selfishness, and I am afraid that Lord Curzon's words gave some colour to that belief.

Lord St. Aldwyn asked us questions with regard to our attitude in the Colonial Conference. He said, in effect—"If you were prepared to take certain other steps in the interest of Colonial trade, leaving out of the question any fiscal preference which may involve pecuniary sacrifice, why did not you take those steps as a means of obtaining further privileges from the Colonies?" The answer is that the issue at the Conference was such a simple one between a free-trade policy and a protectionist policy that it was wiser to allow the issue to remain absolutely clear. Such a suggestion as that which the noble Viscount made is always open to the Government to adopt at any time. But I do not think it would have been wise to attempt to discuss at the Conference large schemes of the kind which he indicates, and to mix them up with this question of Colonial preference.

One other point made by the noble Viscount, I will not attempt to discuss this afternoon—I mean the relation of this matter to our general financial policy. There will be opportunities later in the session when the Finance Bill comes up to this House; therefore, I will not enter into what possible relation the giving of old-age pensions may have to this question of Colonial preference. I quite appreciate the motives of those who look at this matter from a purely political point of view, and who desire to sink the economic point of view altogether. They would wish to do what the Colonies think it reasonable and wise for us to do without considering the economic results. But, my Lords, our point of view must necessarily be a different one, simply because we hold that it is not possible to enter at all upon this road without entering at the same time on the downward path to protection. We cannot consider this question of Colonial preference, so to speak, in a vacuum. It must necessarily be part of an economic change so far-reaching that its effects can hardly be calculated; and we believe that if you take a leap, which would not be a leap in the dark, but a leap in very broad daylight, into the ravine of protection you may not even have the chance which Sir Robert Peel had and took in the middle of last century of making a weary climb back into the regians of fiscal reason and common sense.

The Duke of MARLBOROUGH: My Lords, I listened with the greatest attention and interest to the words which fell from the noble Earl, and I do not this evening propose in any way to attempt to follow him in his arguments. But I should like to ask, in closing this debate, the noble Earl having apparently forgotten the point, whether or not the Government will lay on the Table any further Papers in regard to the negotiations between this country and Canada. The noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition alluded this evening to a despatch written by the noble Marquess the Lord Privy Seal on 20th June, 1895. I understand that since then a new departure has been taken, and communications on the subject have passed between Sir Edward Grey and the Canadian Minister of Marine and Fisheries. They have been quoted in the Canadian Parliament, and I think that any official despatches of that kind which have been laid on the Table of the Dominion Parliament ought to be accessible to us.

***The Earl of CREWE**: The only communication I know of that has passed between Sir Edward Grey and the Canadian Minister was that brief statement as to "full powers" which I read. A copy of this small Canadian Blue-book I am willing to place in the library, but I do not think it would be worth while to reprint it as a Parliamentary Paper, because a considerable part of it consists of letters between Mr. Fielding and Mr. Brodeur, which do not strictly concern the House. I will show the noble Duke the book, and, if necessary, extracts may be printed. In my belief there has been no change of policy or of attitude on the part of His Majesty's Government to these commercial treaties, and the practice followed last year was practically the same as that followed on former occasions.

Motion, by leave of the House, withdrawn.

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

[Second Reading].

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

The Lord CHANCELLOR (Lord Loreburn): My Lords, this is a simple Bill to amend the Prosecution of Offences Acts, 1879 and 1884. It divorces the office of Director of Public Prosecutions from that of the Treasury Solicitor where that separation is needed. There is also one other clause which may have the effect of assisting to prevent vindictive prosecutions. The Bill is a small one in itself and has already passed the House of Commons. I hope, therefore, your Lordships will give it a Second Reading.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Chancellor.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ª, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Eight o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 21st May, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [Lords] (King's Consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

North-East London Railway Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Divorce Bills.—Ordered, That the Order of 19th May for the nomination of the Select Committee on Divorce Bills be read, and discharged.—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Bill (No. 2).—"To further extend the time limited for the purchase of lands and for the construction and completion of the Tramways and works authorised by The Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Tramways Act, 1903; to provide for the transfer to the Corporation of Nottingham of certain of the powers of that Act; to authorise the Corporation to construct additional tramways and a tramroad and street improvements; and for other purposes," presented, and read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Briton Ferry Urban District Council Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments [Title amended]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Llanelly Gas Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MERTHYR TYDFIL CORPORATION BILL [LORDS].

Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Section B); Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to Amendments to Rhymney Railway Bill [Lords], without Amendment. That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend the Law relating to County Courts." [County Courts Bill [Lords.]

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

That they have appointed a Committee consisting of Five Lords to join with a Committee of this House to consider the Port of London Bill (pursuant to Message of this House); That they propose that the said Joint Committee do meet on Wednesday next, in Committee Room A, at three of the clock.

DUBLIN AND CENTRAL IRELAND ELECTRIC POWER BILL.

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.) moved that the Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power Bill should be re-committed to the former Committee, with instructions to reconsider their decision on the preamble of the Bill, except with regard to the City of Dublin, the urban districts of Rathmines and Rathgar and Pembroke, and King's County. The hon. Member said the object of the Bill was for the purpose of creating electrical energy and distributing it either for power or lighting purposes, the chief object being power, which would have for its effect the establishment of certain industries in the locality. Already the promoters had promised that a certain manufacturer of carbide of calcium would establish a large factory if he could get the electrical power in the district, and they also had substantial promises from an American Paper Company. With regard to finance, that had been rearranged in consultation with the Chairman of Committees and the legal advisers of the House, and with regard to the opposition of Dublin and some adjacent areas, those districts had been struck out of the Bill. A third objection to the Bill was on the score of impracticability, but he pointed out that it was not an experimental process, and that its practicability had been demonstrated all over the world. He, therefore, submitted that, the three main objections to the Bill in Committee having been met, the measure should be recommitted.

Motion made, and Question proposed, That the Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power Bill be re-committed to the former Committee. — (*Mr. John O'Connor.*)

***MR. LUKE WHITE** (Yorkshire, E.R., Buckrose) as Chairman of the Committee which considered the Bill, said that Dublin and the other areas mentioned having been struck out, the Bill became of a non-contentious character, and he now asked the House to re-commit the Bill to a Committee as desired.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill re-committed to the former Committee.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to reconsider their decision on the preamble of the Bill as reported by them to the House, except in so far as the same relates to the City of Dublin, the Urban District of Rathmines and Rathgar, the Urban District of Pembroke, and King's County.—(*Mr. John O'Connor.*)

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Westbourne Grove, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (NO. 2) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Farnworth; and Calderbank; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Birmingham; Bristol; Bury St. Edmunds; Cinderford; Lydney; North Birmingham; and North Herefordshire; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions for alteration: From Beeston; Leeds (three); and London; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Bagillt; Bloxwich; Brixton and District; Brynsiencyn; Caergwrle; Caerigceiliog; Chapelhall; Coedllai; Crediton; Devonport; Dowlais; Eaglesfield; Earlsheaton; Glasgow (three); Greenfield; Kilmarnock (two); Lawley; Leeds (four); Lenton Boulevard; Liverpool; Llanerchumor; Llangristriobus; Longbridge; Maerydre; Manchester; Merthyr Tydfil; Mold; Mostyn; Motherwell; Mynydd Isof; North Tawton; Nottingham (seven); Paddington; Peckham; Penydarren; Perth; Peterhead; Pontlottyn; Port Glasgow; Rhosrobin; Rutrerfelin; Stockstead; Trenddyn; and Tryddyn; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions against: From Inverness-shire; Lanarkshire; and West Kilpatrick; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aberdeen; Auchterarder; Buckie; Bucksburn; Chryston; Cullen; Dumfries; Edinburgh; Glasgow (three); Jamestown; Kilmarnock (three); Luncarty; Motherwell (two); Perth; Peterhead; Port Glasgow; Portpatrick; Shotts; Stonehaven; Troon; and Vale of Leven; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition of Sheerness Urban District Council, against, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

PUBLIC-HOUSES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Vale of Leven, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

MINES AND QUARRIES.

Copy presented, of General Report and Statistics for the year 1907, Part I. (District Statistics), Statistics of the Persons employed, Output, and Accidents at Mines and Quarries in the United Kingdom, arranged according to the Inspection Districts [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EVICTIONS (IRELAND).

Copy presented, of Return of the number of Evictions in Ireland for the quarter ended 31st March, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

MAGISTRATES (IRELAND).

Return presented, relative thereto, [ordered 2nd March; *Mr. Devlin*]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, amending the London United Tramways (Light Railways Extensions)

Order, 1904 (London United Tramways Light Railways (Extension of Time) Order, 1908) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and confirmed by the Board of Trade, amending the Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway Act, 1901, and the Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Light Railway) Order, 1907, in reference to the fund deposited in respect of the application for the Act of 1901, and otherwise (Wolverhampton and Cannock Chase Railway (Light Railway) Amendment Order, 1908) [by Command] to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and modified and confirmed by the Board of Trade, reviving the powers granted and extending the periods limited by the Clacton-on-Sea and St. Osyth Light Railway Order, 1904, for the compulsory purchase of lands and for the completion of the railway and works by that Order authorised; and for other purposes (Clacton-on-Sea and St. Osyth Light Railway (Extension of Time) Order, 1908) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LIGHT RAILWAYS ACT, 1896.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Light Railway Commissioners, and confirmed by the Board of Trade, amending the Campbeltown and Machrihanish Light Railway Order, 1905, by increasing borrowing powers; and for other purposes (Campbeltown and Machrihanish Light Railway (Amendment) Order, 1908) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COMMONS ACT, 1876 (TOWYN TREWAN COMMON, ANGLESEY).

Copy presented, of Report by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries upon an Application for a Provisional Order for the Regulation of Towyn Trewan Common, in the parishes of Llanfihangel-yn-nhowyn, Llechylched, and Llanfaelog in the county of Anglesey [by Act] to lie upon the Table, and to be printed [No. 151.]

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) [CONSOLIDATED FUND].

Committee to consider of authorising the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the Fund of the Suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland under any Act of the present session to provide further facilities for the erection of Houses for the Working Classes in cities and towns in Ireland (King's Recommendation signified), To-morrow.—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Press Telegram Delays—The Budget.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can say how many and of what nature were the complaints he received from the *Belfast Evening Telegraph* in reference to the transmission of press telegrams within the last three months; whether he is aware that copy having reference to the Budget of last week, and handed in at London, took two hours and a half to reach Belfast, with the result that an incomplete Report had to be published in the Belfast evening paper; and if he will make inquiries whether the cause is due not to any lack of zeal on the part of the officials at Belfast but to the fact that the staff is under-manned, especially in the afternoon when pressure is the highest.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Complaints have been received from the *Belfast Evening Telegraph* respecting the transmission of press telegrams. There was, unfortunately, some delay on the Budget night to press telegrams to Ireland, owing not only to the great pressure of work but also to partial failure of several important wires. As regards the Belfast office itself the whole of the report appears to have been dealt with expeditiously, and I have no reason to think that the staff at that office is insufficient.

Portsmouth Tug Crews.

MR. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware of the number of hours that the crews of the tugs at Portsmouth are engaged in their work, namely, from ninety-five to 110 hours per week; that in consequence the men have frequently to be on duty three and four days and nights continously without any relief whatever, and are consequently discontented; whether he is also aware that during the month of January last the men worked 372 hours, February, 420 hours; and March, 446 hours; and whether he can promise that the matter shall receive attention so that these long hours may be reduced without delay.

Mr. BRAMSDON: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the tugs at Portsmouth are undermanned; that though the men work long hours no extra pay is allowed them; whether any new tug is being built, and, if so, will it be worked at Portsmouth as an addition to the others now in use there, and, if so, when; and whether he is aware that two emergency boats are kept ready day and night during spring tides with crews on board, and that Portsmouth is the only port where two such boats are so kept.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The points raised by my hon. friend in his Questions were brought before the Board by the men themselves at their interviews with the Board at Portsmouth in April last. Their written petitions and the statements they made at the interviews are now receiving careful consideration at the Admiralty.

Lurgan Linen Trade.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to depression in the linen trade in Lurgan, every branch of which is affected, and to the fact that the artisans are leaving the town; and whether, in view of this state of affairs and of the depression in the linen trade in Belfast, he will appoint a Commission to inquire into the whole position of the linen trade in the North of Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) There has been depression in the textile trade in Lurgan, with consequent distress. I understand, however, that the migration of operatives from the town is not beyond what is usual at this season of the year. The position of this industry in the North of Ireland is being carefully watched by the Department, but I am not prepared, as at present advised, to appoint a special Commission.

Putney Telephone Contract Delays.

Mr. CAVE (Surrey, Kingston): To ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the fact that in July, 1907, he contracted with certain residents in Kersefield Road, Putney, for placing telephones in their houses, and that the carrying out of such contracts has been delayed by reason of the refusal of the local authority to consent to the erection of telephone poles for the purpose, he proposes forthwith to refer the difference to the Courts; and, if not, whether, in view of the delay and inconvenience caused to the residents, he will consent to the telephones being fixed by the National Telephone Company, who are willing to undertake the duty forthwith.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The delay in the provision of the telephone circuits in question, as the hon. Member states, is due to the refusal of the Wandsworth Borough Council to grant the necessary wayleave. The Council have been urged to reconsider their refusal, with the object of obviating the necessity for legal action. I have no information respecting the National Telephone Company's ability to give the service.

Vaccination—Conscientious Objectors.

Sir MAURICE LEVY (Leicestershire, Longborough): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the fact that The Vaccination Act, 1907, was passed for the purpose of rendering it unnecessary for conscientious objectors to vaccination to attend at a police court, he will communicate with all benches of magistrates in the country and point out that any resolution passed by such magistrates requiring conscientious objectors to vaccination to attend at a police court to get their statutory declarations witnessed by justices of the peace is opposed to the spirit in which the Act was passed, seeing that it was intended to prevent applicants having to lose a day's work and to go, often some miles, to a court for the certificate; and whether he is aware that, among other benches, the Bolton and Hanley benches have passed the resolution previously referred to.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I think the "long title" of the Act correctly indicates its object, that is, to substitute a statutory declaration for the certificate previously required, and thereby to relieve an applicant from the necessity of convincing the justices that he has a conscientious objection. Several benches have passed a resolution to the effect that it is undesirable for justices to take these declarations except in open Court, on the ground, as I understand it, that generally speaking it is proper that justices should not transact magisterial business in their own houses, except in cases of urgency; though I was not aware that the Bolton and Hanley magistrates had done so. Such scruples seem to me to be unnecessary. A resolution cannot override the power of any justice to act individually by taking a declaration at his own house if he sees fit, and I think that few justices will wish to put poor persons unnecessarily to the expense and trouble of attending a distant Court by refusing to take their declarations. Moreover, a statutory declaration can be made before a Commissioner for Oaths, or other officer authorised for that purpose, as well as before a justice. In these circumstances I do not think that a circular of the kind suggested by my hon. friend is called for.

On-Licences.

MR. CAVE: To ask the Prime Minister whether he can give the materials on which he founds his estimate that the number of on-licences to be refused under Clause 1 of the Licensing Bill during the statutory period of reduction will be from 30,000 to 32,000; and, if the estimate is founded on an investigation relating to certain licensing areas only, whether he will name the areas selected.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to answer this Question. I would refer the hon. Member to the Answer given on 16th March to a somewhat similar Question put by the hon. Member for Ayr Burghs, and can only add that the Government framed the estimate in question to the best of their ability for the assistance of the House in judging roughly the total effect of the scheme of reduction provided for in the Bill, and that there is no further information on the point which the Government can usefully present to the House.

The Congo—Seizure of SS. "Lapsley."

MR. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been called to the fact that the authorities of the Congo State have recently seized and confiscated the cargo of the steamship "Lapsley," which was manned by British subjects and engaged in legitimate trade along the river in the Kani district; and, if so, what action, if any, he proposes to take.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) No, Sir, my attention has not been called to this incident. I will, however, make inquiries into the matter, and shall be glad if the hon. Member will give me the information at his disposal.

Supply of Army Horses.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he can make any statement as to the result of his conference with the War Office in regard to the question of an efficient supply of horses for military purposes; whether any scheme has been formulated; and, if so, when will it be published.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The matter is still under consideration, and my noble friend is not yet able to make any statement on the subject.

Agricultural Acts Consolidation Bill.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, when the further stages of the Agricultural Holdings

Acts and Small Holdings Acts Consolidation Bills will be taken.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) I understand from my noble friend that he hopes that the next stage of these Bills will be taken on Tuesday next.

School Accommodation at Hawarden.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): To ask the President of the Board of Education if he has received a petition from the ratepayers of Hawarden parish against the proposal to erect a new provided school for all standards; if he is aware that of the 740 children stated to need school accommodation 80 have now left the district; that neither the Church school of Shotton nor the neighbouring council schools of Queen's Ferry and Church school of Sandycroft are full; that the attendance in each of these schools has declined in the last year; and that the only house building projected in the neighbourhood is on the other side of the Dee, in the district of Sealand; and whether, under these circumstances, the Board will reconsider the proposal, in the interest of the ratepayers.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) Yes, Sir; such a petition was received and duly considered. I am not aware that 80 children have left the neighbourhood, but if that be the case there would still remain 660 children for whom the only permanent school within the district apart from the Queen's Ferry School, which is overcrowded, accommodates 282. My information is to the effect that the Church school at Shotton and the Queen's Ferry School are full or over-full. The Sandycroft School is not available owing to distance. I see no reason for reopening the question as to the necessity of a new school; but, on the question of numbers, I will make inquiries as to the points which the hon. Member has raised.

Duty on Award Stamps.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware that the uniform duty of 10s. on an award stamp imposed by Section 9 of the Inland Revenue Act of 1906 presses very hardly on small holders; and if he will be able to alleviate this hardship in the Finance Bill of this year.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The fixed duty was introduced in 1906 to obviate the hardships and anomalies created by the *ad valorem* scale previously in force. The change was made with general approval, and I do not think any further modification is called for.

Income Tax Remissions.

Mr. BRIDGEMAN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether persons who insure their lives are entitled to a remission of income-tax on the premiums on the sole condition that their net income is six times the amount of the premiums; whether the Board of Inland Revenue have this year attached the further condition that the insured person must make a full delcaration of the whole of his income; and whether this condition has been imposed by Parliament or by the action of the Board.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The Board of Inland Revenue do not require a declaration of total income to be made by a person claiming an allowance in respect of life insurance, but only a statement showing that he possesses a taxed income equal to six times the amount in respect of which the allowance is claimed.

France and the Death Duties.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can state the meaning of the following words used in Article 1 of the agreement between the United Kingdom and France respecting Death Duties, namely, all persons domiciled in France; and will he say whether they mean only such persons domiciled in France as have died in England, or on whose death property in England passes.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The reference is not to persons who, having a domicile in France, die in England, but to persons who, having a domicile in France, die possessed of moveable property in England.

Mr. BOWLES: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the information to be furnished to the French Government under Article 1 of the Death Duties agreement of 15th November, 1907, includes information hitherto regarded as confidential and furnished confidentially to the Inland Revenue authorities for the purpose of enabling them to ascertain the duties; and will all the information to be furnished to the French Government under that article be also furnished to any British subject on application.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) Except for the purpose of complying with the Article referred to, it is not proposed to alter the practice of the Inland Revenue authorities as to disclosure of the contents of documents rendered for fiscal purposes.

Income-tax on Company Profits.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has taken into consideration the way in which income-tax is levied on the profits of companies and corporations without allowing for necessary writing off of capital and provision of reserve fund; and whether he proposes to amend the law to carry into effect such a change.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The proposed change could not be made without infringing the essential principle of the income-tax, viz., that the tax should be levied on the full profits of a business, without reference to the purposes to which such profits are applied.

Special Reserve—Battalion Bands.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether Line officers attached to the Special Reserve battalions are to pay the usual band subscription which is paid by the other officers of the battalion during its annual training.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This question is now under consideration.

MR. HUNT: To ask the Secretary of State for War what allowance will be made by the War Office towards the up-keep of bands of the new infantry Special Reserve battalions.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) An annual allowance of £25, or so much less as has been actually expended, will be granted to each unit of the Special Reserve for a band.

Breeding of Army Horses.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: To ask the Secretary of State for War if he can say what has been the result of his communications with the Board of Agriculture as to the best methods for encouraging the breeding of horses for the Army; and whether he will, for the information of horse-breeders and the benefit of the Army, formulate a scheme before the close of this session.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I am not yet in a position to state the result of the negotiations with the Board of Agriculture, nor can I at present undertake to give a date by which a scheme will have been formulated.

Cadet Corps.

MR. ARTHUR PRIESTLEY (Grantham): To ask the Secretary of State for War what is the present relation of cadet corps to units of the Territorial Force to which they were formerly attached; and whether he can make any announcement as to the future *status* of cadet corps.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Existing cadet corps will for the present be administered by the War Office and not by the County Associations. A certain number of school corps will be invited to join the officers' training corps under the scheme outlined in the Army Order of 16th March. The future *status* of other cadet corps will be considered with the Associations, as soon as the Associations have had full time to work out the main questions connected with the Territorial Force which now claim their attention.

Government Factory Estimates.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): To ask the Secretary of State for War what is the explanation of the decrease of £239,000 in the Estimates for materials and stores for Woolwich Arsenal, Enfield, and Waltham Abbey for the year 1908–1909.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) This decrease is partly due to reduced requirements in stores to be manufactured for the Army, the Navy, India, and the Colonies. It is also accounted for by a fall in the price of metals and by the abandonment of a proposed system which was provided for in the year 1907–1908 of charging to the Ordnance Factories Vote the value of component parts issued to the Ordnance Factories for repairs, etc., from Army and Navy stocks. I may add that no decrease in the reserve stocks of stores is contemplated.

Volunteer Long Service Medal.

MR. CARLILE: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Volunteer long-service medal will be granted to a Volunteer who served in that force from 23rd April, 1888, until it was disbanded on 31st March, 1908, and who enlisted in the Territorial Force on 15th April, and in which he is now serving.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane*). Will the hon. and gallant Member kindly refer to the reply given to a similar Question put yesterday by the hon. Member for the Isle of Thanet Division of Kent?

Army Service in India—Furlough Regulations.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is prepared to grant facilities to non-commissioned officers and men of good conduct serving in India, or on foreign service, for the means of returning home on furlough, as enjoyed by commissioned officers, in view of the fact that such a privilege would stimulate their re-engagement with the colours.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane*). The matter is still under consideration with the India Office.

Horses for the Territorial Army.

MR. HUNT: To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, even if the men for the Territorial Army are forthcoming, there are at present only about half the number of horses required, including those which are registered.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane*). Approximately 124,000 horses are required to mobilise the Territorial Force. There is no doubt that there are more than enough suitable horses in the United Kingdom to meet this requirement, exclusive of those registered for the Regular Army.

Belfast Health Commission Report.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any action has been taken either by the local authority or by the Local Government Board with regard to the Report of the Belfast Health Commission; whether he is aware that the Commission attribute the recurrence of typhoid to shell fish and insanitary conditions; whether any figures are available as to the quantity and source of supply of the shell fish referred to; whether he has any official Reports showing that not more than one-third of the drains and sewers in Belfast will stand the smoke test; and whether the Report is to remain a dead letter, or whether the Local Government Board will take action to see that the recommendations of the Commissioners are carried out.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I refer to my Answer to the hon. Member's Question of the 4th instant on this subject. The Report is still under the consideration of the Belfast Corporation. Having regard to the many important recommendations made therein, the Corporation must be allowed a reasonable time for decision before the Local Government Board can take action. The various matters mentioned in the Question are referred to in the Report, but the Board have no more definite information on the subject than is therein contained.

Queen's Colleges, Ireland.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH, (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in withdrawing the charter under which the Queen's Colleges were constituted and introducing a new charter, it is intended to give those professors of the Queen's Colleges who do not care to take service on the new terms an opportunity of retiring on fair terms as to pension, as was done in the case of the Marischal College, Aberdeen, and in the case of some officers of the late Queen's University in Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Existing professors will be offered equivalent posts in the reconstituted colleges, but it is not proposed to give them compensation if they should not choose to accept such equivalent posts. I think the hon. and learned Member will find that no option was given in the cases to which he refers. The enactments governing those cases appear to be The Universities (Scotland) Act, 1858, Section 18 (2), and The University Education (Ireland) Act, 1879, Section 14.

Macroom Council's Land Legislation Resolution.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a resolution from the Macroom Urban Council demanding that he should introduce a measure giving fixity of tenure, fair rents, and free sale to town tenants, and ascribing much of the evils of emigration and pauperism to the present system of town tenure; and whether legislation on the lines mentioned is contemplated by the Government.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I would remind the hon. Member that The Town Tenants (Ireland) Act, 1906, provides for compensation to certain classes of town tenants for improvements and for unreasonable disturbance. The Government do not contemplate further legislation on the subject.

Irish Labourers' Cottages—Lack of Kitchen Accommodation.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention had been called to the inadequacy of the kitchen accommodation in the cottages erected under the Labourers Acts in Ireland; and whether he would have inquiries made into the matter, with a view to the provision of more ample kitchen space in cottages to be erected in future.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board have given the whole question of the plans of labourers' cottages very full consideration in connection with the Act passed in 1906, and have issued model plans and a Memorandum on the subject to all rural district councils in Ireland. These provide that the kitchen or living room should contain from 1,200 to 1,400 cubic feet, preferably the latter. There has been no general complaint of the inadequacy of the kitchen accommodation provided in cottages already built.

Clyde Herring Fishery.

MR. LAMONT (Buteshire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he will lay upon the Table a statement showing the number of hundredweights of herrings landed in the Clyde districts collectively and in Campbeltown, Inveraray, Rothesay, Greenock, and Ballantrae severally during the year 1907, in continuation of the statement furnished by him on 19th April, 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The following is the information desired by the Member:—

District.	Cwts.
Campbeltown - -	95,210
Inverary - - -	13,698
Rothesay - - -	6,285
Greenock - - -	42,599
Ballantrae - - -	15,709
Total - - -	173,501

Motor Car Fatalities.

SIR G. KEKEWICH (Exeter): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is now prepared, seeing the number of fatal accidents due to motor cars and motor omnibuses, to introduce fresh legislation on the subject of motor traffic.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. I do not think I can give any promise to introduce legislation dealing with this subject during the present session.

Sheep Dipping Inspectors and the Welsh Language.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he is aware that the last two sheep-dipping inspectors sent to Montgomeryshire were unable to speak Welsh with the hill farmers, some of whom are imperfectly acquainted with English; and whether he will take steps to provide Welsh-speaking inspectors in future.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) It is the case that inspectors have recently been employed in Montgomeryshire who are unable to speak Welsh. As my hon. friend is aware, Welsh-speaking inspectors have recently been added to the staff and these inspectors are as far as possible employed in Wales, but it would not be practicable to arrange that none but Welsh-speaking inspectors should undertake business arising in Wales.

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill.

MR. A. ALLEN (Christchurch): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether the Board received a request from the London County Council, as the local education authority, to insert in the Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill, recently introduced, certain clauses which have been frequently inserted in local Acts, and other than those which were inserted in the Bill; and what were the circumstances which caused the Board to refuse to insert those clauses, having regard to the answer of the late President of the Board to a Question on 20th August, 1907, that the Board of Education were prepared, on the request of the local education authority to insert in Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, where the circumstances in the opinion of the Board justified such a course, those clauses which, having been frequently inserted in local Acts, are regarded in the practice of Parliament as model clauses.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) Certain proposed additional clauses were forwarded by the London County Council with their petition for compulsory powers under Section 20 of The Elementary Education Act, 1870. Of these clauses the Board inserted in the confirming Bill such as in their opinion could be regarded as model clauses, and had been approved by Parliament as such. The Board did not feel justified in regarding others as model clauses, and, in accordance with their usual practice, did not insert them in the Bill; but they are in communication with the Parliamentary authorities on the subject.

Poor Law Children.

MR. L. HASLAM (Monmouth Boroughs): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state the number of Poor Law children at present maintained in the district and separate schools, and in the village communities of London and the provinces, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The number of children in separate establishments belonging to guardians of Poor Law unions in England and Wales on 1st January, 1908, was as follows:—

	London.	Outside London.	Total.
In district and separate schools - -	7,281	4,321	11,602
In cottage, scattered, and other homes	4,782	12,308	17,090

Public Works and Cornish Granite.

MR. CROYDON MARKS (Cornwall, Launceston): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether any steps can be taken to suggest to public bodies requiring loans or public money for their contracts that, when inviting tenders for granite, the practice of excluding Cornish granite by definitely specifying in the forms of tender that the granite must be from Norway, should be discontinued in the interests of the ratepayers, owing to the fact that Cornish granite has been proved considerably cheaper than Norwegian by the recently published tenders for the Birmingham Council House extension, and also from the fact that Cornish granite has withstood the severest tests for all purposes for many generations, whereas the Norwegian granite has not been so proved in this country.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I do not think that I can make any general suggestions to local authorities of the kind referred to in the question. If Cornish granite is cheaper than that imported from Norway, the local authorities would no doubt prefer to use it, other things being equal; but I am advised that it has not at present been proved that in all circumstances Cornish granite is cheaper than Norwegian.

Boarded-Out Poor Law Children.

MR. TOULMIN (Bury, Lancashire): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state the number of Poor Law children boarded-out within and beyond the union at the date of the last Return; and the number of Poor Law children emigrated to Canada during 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) As regards the first point the most recent Return relates to the 1st January last. On that date 6,689 children were boarded-out within the union and 1,876 beyond the union. During 1907 the Local Government Board issued Orders authorising expenditure by boards of guardians in respect of the emigration to Canada of 397 orphan or deserted children. Expenditure in respect of the emigration to Canada of 447 other children was authorised during the year by Orders relating to the emigration of persons with their families.

Ferndale Road Home for Pauper Children.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that about twenty Church of England pauper children, who are being brought up in the Ferndale Road Home of the West Ham Guardians, have, during the past few weeks, been forced to attend a Nonconformist place of worship instead of the parish church, which they had previously attended; and, if so, what is the reason for the change.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) My attention has not been called to this matter, but I will make inquiry with regard to it.

Aged Persons in Receipt of Poor Law Relief.

MR. T. R. BETHELL (Essex, Maldon): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he can state what proporttion of persons over seventy years of age chargeable to the Poor Law unions are in receipt of outdoor relief, and whether there is any uniform practice among boards of guardians as to the granting of outdoor relief to the aged poor.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I am not in a position to state the precise proportion, but it is estimated that about three out of every four persons over seventy years of age who are chargeable to Poor Law unions and parishes are in receipt of outdoor relief. Boards of guardians in England and Wales, I think, usually grant outdoor relief to deserving aged persons who have no adequate means of subsistence, unless there is some cause which renders admission to the workhouse necessary in the interests of the pauper.

H.M.S. "Ringdove."

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty if he will state the speed of the gunboat "Ringdove," now on police duty in the Moray Firth, and stationed at Fortrose.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) I must refer my hon. friend to the reply given to the same Question by the Secretary for Scotland on 18th May last.

Home Production of Hops.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the Home production, imports, and exports of hops for each year prior to 1885–6 for which the figures are known.

MR. CHURCHILL: There is no official record of the production of hops in the United Kingdom for a considerable period prior to 1885. The information as to the imports and exports of hops from 1875 to the present date was printed in the Votes in reply to a Question by the hon. Member for Gravesend on 19th May last.

Promotion in the Customs Preventive Service.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he can state the number of promotions per annum from the grade of preventive man to that of preventive officer in His Majesty's Customs Department during the past seven years, the length of service of the preventive man before promotion, and the number of preventive men at present awaiting the forthcoming examination; and the number of preventive men who are at present on their maximum salary, and the total number who were on the staff at the end of 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The following statement gives the information requested:—

Year.	Number of promotions of preventive men to preventive officers.	Average length of service before promotion.	
		Years.	Months.
1901	37	16	4
1902	32	16	7
1903	34	16	1
1904	53	15	8
1905	33	16	2
1906	36	16	11
1907	31	17	5

Number of preventive men awaiting the forthcoming examination, 60; number of preventive men who are at their maximum, 485*; number of preventive men on the staff at the end of 1906, 862.

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*Of the above 485 preventive men, 98 are finally excluded from promotion.

Richmond Park.

MR. CAVE: To ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he has received from certain schools and institutions in Mortlake an application for permission to play football and other games in Richmond Park; and, if so, whether there is any way in which effect can be given to the desire so expressed.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) I am giving this matter my sympathetic attention. But I am not at present in a position to make any statement.

Realised Surplus for 1907-8.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what portion of the realised surplus of the year 1907–8 was due to over-issues in 1906–7.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The amount by which the Exchequer Issues for Supply Services in 1907–8 were reduced owing to the fact that issues had been made to Departments at the close of 1906–7 in excess of the requirements for their expenditure to that date, as subsequently ascertained, was £715,000.

Clerks to Surveyors of Taxes.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the scheme of re-classification of clerks to surveyors of taxes has not yet been brought in to operation; and will he state when such scheme is to be given effect to.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) So far as possible the scheme was brought into operation from the date of the Treasury authority, but full effect cannot be given to it until the necessary arrangements with the Civil Service Commissioners have been completed.

Ireland and Old-Age Pensions.

MR. DEVLIN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, under the Old Age Pensions Bill, regard will be had to the difficulty of proving age in the case of Irish applicants, and special provision made to meet this difficulty; and, in the cases of small landholders claiming the pension, whether he could state on what basis their present income will be calculated.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I do not think it would be convenient to anticipate, by Answers to Questions in the House, discussion of the detailed provisions of the Bill.

Huntingdon Volunteer Battalion Accounts.

MR. WHITBREAD (Huntingdonshire, Huntingdon): To ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he is aware that application has been made to the Chief Accountant, Eastern Command, by the officer lately commanding the Huntingdonshire Volunteer Battalion, Bedfordshire Regiment, for the payment of £1,299 9s. 3d., which was earned by the battalion as capitation and other grants for the year ending 31st October, 1907, and that of this sum only £50 has been paid to the said officer; and what are the reasons for the non-payment of the remainder of the sum.

(*Answered by Mr. Acland.*) The legitimate debts of corps are being discharged by a grant from Army funds, so that the corps may be transferred to County Associations free of debt. No capitation grants have been paid to Volunteer corps on 1st April; the grant for 1908–9 is being paid to the County Associations on the new basis. The sum of £50 in question was an advance towards the sum required for payments of debts.

Royal Warrant for Pay.

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether, with reference to Paragraph 576 of the Royal Warrant for Pay, which states that a sum of £14,200 a year shall be distributed for distinguished or meritorious service amongst officers of the Regular Army, he will state the number of general officers on the retired list receiving allowances from this source, the number of combatant officers under the rank of general officer receiving such allowances, and the number of medical, veterinary, and departmental officers on the retired list receiving such allowances.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) If the hon. and gallant Member will refer to pages 191 to 193 of the Army Estimates for 1908–9, he will find a complete list of all officers in receipt of such allowances.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Australian Commonwealth and the Navy.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what is the new arrangement as to naval affairs arrived at with the Australian Commonwealth.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouth, N.): The general features of the scheme proposed by the Commonwealth Government in substitution for the present agreement have been already published by the Press. It is mainly an attempt to combine interchangeability of the *personnel* of the Australian naval force with that of the Royal Navy, together with complete control by the Commonwealth Government over the material and *personnel* of that force while actually serving in the Australian vessels. The scheme as put forward by Mr. Deakin is in bare outline, and requires much amplification before it can be discussed with advantage, while the difficulties inherent in the scheme itself are very great.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Can the right hon. Gentleman state whether, pending the ratification of the establishment of the Commonwealth Navy, the subsidy continues to be paid?

MR. MCKENNA: Oh, yes, Sir, it continues at present.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Has any date been fixed for the end of the subsidy?

MR. MCKENNA: I think it will automatically cease as it exists at present in 1913.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Is it not the fact that as an outcome of the Colonial Conference recently held here, the Admiralty waived the subsidy when this scheme was first mentioned? Will it continue to be paid till the date mentioned or not?

MR. McKENNA: As soon as the new arrangement is made, the subsidy, in its present form, will come to an end, but till then, no doubt it will go on.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): Does the new arrangement include any joint obligation as to coaling stations in the Southern Pacific?

MR. McKENNA asked for notice of the Question.

Nucleus Crew on H.M.S. "Terrible."

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty for what reason a nucleus crew has been on board H.M.S. "Terrible" since November, 1906, during which period the ship has been disabled and under repair at Portsmouth; and whether the Board intend to continue keeping a nucleus crew on board this ship until her repairs are completed at the end of this financial year.

MR. McKENNA: It was convenient in regard to the maintenance of the vessel and her repairs to keep the nucleus crew for the time being, as the men were available. In reply to the last part of the Question, the Answer is in the negative.

MR. BELLAIRS asked whether the convenience of making nucleus crews do this dockyard work was merely for economy, and was not the fighting training of the crew sacrificed by keeping them eighteen months in harbour.

MR. McKENNA: I should not consider it merely a matter of economy.

Instruction in Seamanship for Midshipmen.

MR. BEAUCHAMP (Suffolk, Lowestoft): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is intended that an additional lieutenant shall be appointed to ships carrying midshipmen, to instruct them in seamanship, and to supervise their training, as indicated in Statement of Admiralty Policy, November, 1905, or whether this intention has been abandoned since it has been decided to appoint naval instructors to ships carrying the new scheme midshipmen.

MR. McKENNA: The instructions for the training of junior officers under the new system, as recently promulgated in Circular Letter No. 51 of the 1st May, 1908, provide for the performance of the duties which it was contemplated in 1905 would require the appointment of an additional lieutenant to the ships in which the midshipmen are borne. As naval instructors are available for appointment to these ships, it is not proposed to appoint an additional lieutenant unless experience shall show it to be necessary.

Admiralty Brush Contracts.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that many firms who contract for the supply of brushes for the Admiralty are not paying the standard rate of wages in their particular district; and whether he will assist in the prevention of sweating by giving the names of those firms in receipt of Government contracts.

MR. McKENNA: No complaints have been received by the Admiralty that brush contractors are not paying the standard rate of wages. The contracts contain the usual condition as to fair wages, and any specific complaint against a contractor shall be investigated. The question of publishing the names of Government contractors is at present under consideration.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, N.): If it can be proved that any contractor is not paying the trade union rate of wages will the Admiralty strike him off their list?

MR. McKENNA: I should like to have the case brought before me before the punishment is considered.

Case of Eli Bath.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the crime for which ordinary seaman Eli Bath was sentenced to five years penal servitude was that of knocking down a midshipman; whether a similar sentence passed in December, 1906, on signalman Abbott for attempting to sell a naval signal-book to the agent of a foreign Power was reduced unconditionally to three years; and whether he will explain why a similar unconditional reduction was not made in Bath's case.

MR. McKENNA: The signalman Abbott was not charged as stated by the hon. Member. The charges were—(*a*) stealing a boat's signal-book, the property of His Majesty; and (*b*) improperly leaving his ship. He pleaded guilty; and the Board of that time considered that the offences did not warrant such a severe sentence as five years, and it was reduced accordingly. In the case of Eli Bath, the attack upon the midshipman was brutal and might have been fatal. Recent inquiries as to whether some clemency could not be shown in this case have been met with the answer that his conduct in prison has been unsatisfactory; and no action can therefore be taken.

MR. HUNT: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the only thing against Bath in prison was his quarrelling with other prisoners, which may or may not have been his fault? Has he not been in prison now for three and a half years for a quite unpremeditated crime committed in a sudden fit of passion, and is not the revealing of naval secrets a very much more serious crime than that for which Bath is suffering punishment?

MR. McKENNA: Had these points been embodied in the original Question I might have been informed on them.

Wireless Telegraphy in India.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether communication by wireless telegraphy has been established between India and any other British Possessions; and whether any wireless telegraphy stations exist in the Indian Empire.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Mr. BUCHANAN, Perthshire, E.): As far as I am aware, no communication by wireless telegraphy has as yet been established between India and any other British Possessions. Wireless communication has been established between Diamond Island and Port Blair and between Sangoa Island and the pilot steamer at the sand heads.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): was understood to ask if the Indian Government had been requested to make provision in the Estimates for the establishment of wireless telegraphy stations.

MR. BUCHANAN: I should like to have notice of that Question.

Taxation in India.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether in any part of India 75 per cent. of their net profits are collected by way of taxation from the peasantry by the Government of India, or whether, when any rate at all approximating to this figure is collected, it is taken not from the cultivators of the soil but from the middlemen, who were comparatively recently converted into landlords in the Central Provinces by the British Government, such landlords or middlemen being under legal control in respect of the rent which they may levy from their cultivating tenants, which is fixed by law with due regard to the circumstances and customs of the locality.

MR. BUCHANAN: In no part of British India is it the case that the land revenue assessment represents 75 per cent. of the net profits of the cultivator. In provinces where the land is held by zemindars, or landlords, the revenue assessment is ordinarily below 50 per cent of the rental, and in provinces where the State deals directly with the cultivating occupant, it is considerably less than half the net profits of cultivation. In zemindari provinces tenancy laws, regulating the amount of the rent payable by the cultivators to the zemindars, are in force.

*MR. REES: Is it not the fact that since British succeeded to native rule in India there has been a regular and progressive decrease in the share of the profits taken by the State from the cultivators?

MR. BUCHANAN: I believe that is the case.

*MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): But is the right hon. Gentleman aware that what is termed the legal rent does not represent the real burden imposed on the cultivator, who has to borrow money, often from his landlord, at exorbitant interest, and has not seldom to pay extras and to render personal service?

*MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) asked if the 50 per cent. was not merely a nominal and theoretical figure, and if it did not amount in practice in some cases to 75 per cent. of the crop.

MR. BUCHANAN: It is not theoretical at all.

Imperial Cadet Corps.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the Government of India has yet submitted a definite scheme for the employment of officers commissioned from the Imperial Cadet Corps?

MR. BUCHANAN: The Government of India have not yet submitted a scheme.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD: When will it?

MR. BUCHANAN: I am afraid I cannot say.

Indian Tariffs.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that, under the present Indian tariff, alcohol, sulphur, saltpetre, borax, hides, skins, pitch, tar, stone, marble, cement, lime, flax, hemp, and silk, and all sorts of dyeing and tanning materials, are subject to a 5 per cent. tax; and whether the articles so taxed are regarded by the Indian Government as raw materials or as manufactured articles.

MR. BUCHANAN: The Answer to the first Question is in the affirmative. With regard to the second Question, the Indian Trade Returns show some of the articles in question under the head of raw materials and others under other heads. I have no other information as to how they are regarded by the Government of India.

MR. HAROLD COX: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that a distinguished ex-Viceroy has recently suggested that this tariff should be applied to this country?

MR. BUCHANAN: I am afraid I cannot answer that.

MR. HUNT asked if the salt extracted from the sea by the Indian natives for their own use was treated as a manufactured article.

MR. BUCHANAN: It is not imported into India.

MR. HUNT: But do the Indian peasants have to pay taxes on the salt they thus extract?

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not arise out of the Question on the Paper.

Indian Industries—Sulphuric Acid.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that Mr. Holland, director of the Geological Survey, recently reported that a cheap supply of sulphuric acid would be the key to many industries now either non-existent in India or in a feeble condition; and whether in view of this Report, the Indian Government proposes to abolish the present tax of 5 per cent. *ad valorem* upon imported sulphuric acid.

MR. BUCHANAN: The Secretary of State is aware that Mr. Holland reported that certain industries would be encouraged in India if sulphuric acid could be cheapened by being manufactured on the spot; but it does not seem probable that this result would be produced by the abolition of the 5 per cent. import duty, and I have no reason to suppose that the Government of India wish to abolish it.

MR. HAROLD COX: May I ask whether the advantage to the industries of India would arise from the manufacture of sulphuric acid on the spot or from its cheapness?

MR. BUCHANAN: I think the hon. Member is under some misapprehension. I shall be glad to show him exactly what Mr. Holland said.

MR. R. DUNCAN: If that taxation were remitted, would not the equivalent revenue have to be raised in another way?

MR. BUCHANAN: Yes, probably that is the case.

Indian Tariffs on Tools and Machinery.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that, under the Indian tariff, workmen's tools and hand-driven machinery are, with some exceptions, subject to a 3 per cent. *ad valorem* tax; and whether it is part of the policy of His Majesty's Government that His Majesty's Indian subjects should be taxed upon the implements of their industry.

MR. BUCHANAN: Tools and hand-driven machinery with exceptions in favour of various classes of agricultural implements are on import liable to the general import duty of 5 per cent. *ad valorem*. The bulk of the tools used by workmen in India are not imported, and are therefore not affected.

Indian Import Duties.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he can state what is the total number of articles liable to import duties under the present Indian tariff; how many articles out of this total yield any appreciable revenue; and what is the total yield of the present British tariff.

MR. BUCHANAN: The Indian tariff deals with groups of articles and I am unable to give the total number of articles liable to duty. About 89 per cent. of the Indian Customs revenue is realised from about twenty-six articles. The gross yield of the Indian Customs in 1906–7 was £4,351,000. The corresponding figures for the United Kingdom was £32,930,000.

Asiatics and Mozambique.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will obtain and lay upon the Table, or in the Library, such anti-Asiatic legislation, if any, as is proposed by the Portuguese Government for its province of Mozambique.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury; for Colonel SEELY): My hon. friend has at present no information on this subject, but inquiry shall be made.

British Indians in Trinidad.

*MR. REES: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether such statistics as are available indicate any higher degree of criminality in the British Indian immigrants into Trinidad than obtains in the case of other inhabitants of that island; and whether his Answer is based upon a comparison excluding or including mere breaches of the Immigration Ordinance.

MR. RUNCIMAN (for Colonel SEELY): The statistics furnished by the Government of Trinidad show that, apart from convictions for breach of the Immigration Ordinance, the number of convictions for ordinary offences of East Indians in Trinidad compares favourably with that of the rest of the population. The Secretary of State is informed that the great majority of East Indians in Trinidad are industrious and law-abiding.

Cost of East African Administration.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state the amount paid by the Government for the maintenance of the East Africa administration, the number of salaried Government officials and of salaried representatives of absentees and syndicates, approximately the number of *bona fide* settlers.

MR. RUNCIMAN (for Colonel SEELY): The amount of the grant-in-aid of the East Africa Protectorate for the current year is £138,000. The Secretary of State is unable to furnish the other figures for which the hon. Member asks, but will ask the Governor to supply them, as nearly as they can be ascertained.

Alcoholic Liquors in the New Hebrides.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has any official information showing that French traders, alleging that gin is the only liquor prohibited in the New Hebrides, have landed large cargoes of wine, beer, and whiskey on certain of the islands; and whether he will take steps to expedite the appointment of British officials authorised to interpret and enforce the Convention.

MR. RUNCIMAN (for Colonel SEELY): The Secretary of State has no information to the effect stated in the first part of the hon. and gallant Member's Question. Except with the joint permission of the British and French Resident Commissioners, it is unlawful to import into the New Hebrides any gin, whiskey, brandy, or other liquor containing alcohol and used for trade. Some of the British officials required to carry out the Convention have already been appointed. The staff will be increased as it is found necessary and possible.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman cause inquiry to be made especially with regard to the island of Ambrym?

MR. RUNCIMAN: I will convey that request to my hon. and gallant friend.

Great Britain and Siam.

MR. RIDSDALE (Brighton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is in a position to make any statement with regard to the negotiations with Siam.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY, Northumberland, Berwick): The Answer is in the negative.

Brussels Sugar Convention.

MR. VILLIERS (Brighton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether all the contracting States except Great Britain received the assent of their several Parliaments before signing the additional Act and Protocol to the Brussels Sugar Convention.

SIR EDWARD GREY: So far as I am aware, the Answer is in the negative. The matter is, of course, one of constitutional practice, which varies with each country.

Italy and the Sugar Convention.

MR. VILLIERS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Italy has been granted a further space of three months before being compelled to decide if she will retire from the Sugar Convention or not; and, if so, whether His Majesty's Government could also obtain a further extension of time in order that the subject may be discussed in this House.

SIR EDWARD GREY: As regards the first part of the Question, I would refer the hon. Member to the Parliamentary Paper which has recently been laid, (Commercial, No 3, 1908). The Answer to the second part of the Question is in the negative. This country has ratified the additional Act, and there is no analogy between our position and that of Italy. I may also remind the hon. Member that Questions on this point were asked at the beginning of the session and that the Act was not ratified till 14th February some time after Parliament had met.

MR. VILLIERS asked if the Sugar Convention of 1902 was ratified by Act of Parliament after it was signed by His Majesty's representative.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Perhaps the hon. Member will give me notice of that Question.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): May I ask if, before the expiration of the three months, Italy decides to remain in the Convention she will be permitted to export sugar to this country, and will this country as a member of the Convention be a party to that arrangement?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I do not quite follow the Question, but I observe it is hypothetical and I cannot therefore answer it.

Employment of Children in Egyptian Factories.

MR. G. GOOCH (Bath): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will advise the Egyptian Government to make regulations with regard to the employment of children and young persons in factories and workshops in all cases in which such action is not prevented by the Capitulations.

SIR EDWARD GREY: This question is already occupying the serious attention of the Egyptian Government, with a view to the adoption of remedial measures when practicable.

Contracts for Nile Bridges.

MR. HENRY (Shropshire, Wellington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what course will be adopted to have tested the material that will be employed by the Compagnie de Fives-Lille in the order given that firm for bridges over the Nile; what arrangements have been made to have the bridges inspected whilst in course of construction and when completed; and if, when deciding to accept the tender of the French firm, any account was taken of the extra cost that might be involved in testing and inspecting in excess of what would have been incurred if the work had been executed in this country.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am not in a position to answer the first and second parts of the Question, the subject of which is a matter concerning the internal administration of Egypt, who have hitherto taken adequate measures to ensure good work and good material. I can, if desired, ascertain what the practice of the Egyptian Government is in such matters. As regards the last part of the Question, I am not aware that any saving would be entailed to the Egyptian Government in the cost of testing and inspecting if the work were executed by a British firm. The Egyptian Government must presumably treat British and foreign work without discrimination.

Old-Age Pensions.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the estimate which he gave on the introduction of the Budget of the cost of the scheme of old-age pensions includes the provision of a pension to those who are earning a wage of over 10s. but under 15s. a week, and who, in order to entitle them to a pension, may be expected to reduce their wages to 10s a week.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): No, Sir; nor is it intended to include persons who may artificially depress their income below the limit of disqualification.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): Will the Bill be introduced soon?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I think that it would be for the convenience of the House if the Bill were printed and circulated as soon as possible. But inasmuch as I made a full statement on the subject in my Budget speech, I should suggest, if it is the general wish of the House, that the Bill should be presented and circulated at the earliest possible moment. It will not require a preliminary Financial Resolution.

*MR. MYER (Lambeth, N.): May I ask whether the statement made by the right hon. Gentleman on the subject was a full statement of the provisions, or whether it was a statement of the full provisions?

MR. ASQUITH: The subtlety of my hon. friend's distinction is too great for me to follow. He will be able to judge whether I made a full statement, or whether the provisions of the Bill are fuller than my statement.

Case of Henry Squires, of Stratford.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of Henry Squires, of West Street, Stratford, who was sentenced at the Old Bailey to twelve months' imprisonment on 12th March for stealing boots from a shop in Stratford; and whether, in consideration of this man's character and the nature of the evidence that was given against him, he could see his way clear to have the sentence reduced.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): My attention has been called to this case, and I have made careful inquiries into the facts, but, after consultation with the learned Judge, I find no grounds for advising any reduction of the sentence.

Tailoring Trade and the Particulars Clause.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can now lay before the House of Commons the result of the investigations as to the complaints he has received respecting the non-observance in the tailoring trade of the provisions of the particulars clause of the Factory Act.

MR. GLADSTONE: I answered that Question last Monday.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that one of the Royal Warrant holders is infringing this particular clause.

MR. GLADSTONE: That has no relation to the Question on the Paper. If the hon. Member wishes to deal with specific cases perhaps he will put the Question down.

Deaths from Starvation.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Table of Deaths in London in the year 1907 upon which a coroner's jury has returned a verdict of death from starvation, or death accelerated by privation, will be published; and whether the Government will take steps to compile and publish a similar table for the whole of England and Wales, showing in what Poor Law Unions they take place.

MR. GLADSTONE: The Return for 1907 is now in the hands of the Local Government Board, who are collecting the reports from the guardians on the cases returned by the coroners. I will consult my right hon. friend, the President of the Board, as to whether the reports can be expedited, and also whether any useful purpose would be served by extending the Return.

Cinematograph Exhibitions.

EARL OF KERRY (Derbyshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of his admission of the serious dangers of cinematograph exhibitions, and of his statement to the deputation from the London County Council on 28th February last, that he considered it most desirable these unlicensed exhibitions should be put under proper authority, he can see his way shortly to introduce legislation with this object.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have not lost sight of this matter, but I am not in a position to say whether legislation can be introduced in the present session.

Cardiff Flogging Sentences.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that in a case of one man, John Jones, sentenced to be flogged at the recent Cardiff Assizes, the victim of the outrage did not appear as a witness, and the accused was convicted on the evidence of one policeman who said he saw what took place at a distance, while in the case of two other men, Downey and Burns, who were also sentenced to be flogged at the Cardiff Assizes, the evidence was that they threatened to shoot the prosecutor with a revolver which was not loaded and was without a trigger, and that the prosecutor admitted that he had not been hurt; and whether, having regard to the fact that these sentences were pronounced before the Criminal Appeal Act came into operation, what explanation, if any, has he to give for his refusal to consider them.

MR. GLADSTONE: No one named Jones was sentenced to be flogged at the recent Cardiff Assizes, and I do not know to what case the hon. Members refers in the first part of the question. Downey was not sentenced to be flogged in respect of the case described by the hon. Member. He was convicted, with Bews (there was no prisoner of the name of Burns) of robbery with actual personal violence in another case, and was sentenced to five years penal servitude and twelve strokes with the cat. A petition from him was considered by me, but I saw no grounds for interfering with the sentence. Bews, not Burns, received a sentence of ten months' hard labour, but was not sentenced to be flogged.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his refusal to consider the flogging sentences passed at the recent Assizes at Cardiff before the punishment was inflicted is at variance with the practice of the late Viscount Ridley when at the Home Office, who stated on the 28th March, 1900, that it was undesirable to inflict an irrevocable punishment, that he had cases before him when the sentence of flogging had been imposed in which it had been extremely difficult to decide whether the crime itself had been committed, and that in any of the cases, when he had come to the decision that the sentence ought not to have been inflicted, it would have been a very painful reflection to him if the flogging had been inflicted; and whether he will explain the reason of the distinction between his practice in dealing with such cases and that of a former Home Secretary.

MR. GLADSTONE: There has been no alteration in the practice. Any case where an application is made to me by or on behalf of a prisoner sentenced to corporal punishment would be considered by me in the same way as it was considered by my predecessor—and if I found any ground for interference, I would advise remission of the sentence, or part of it. In the recent cases at Cardiff, I carefully considered the petitions addressed to me by three of the prisoners, but I could find no ground that would justify interference.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Having regard to the nature of this puninshment did not the right hon. Gentleman think it his duty to inquire whether flogging should be inflicted or not, especially in view of the fact that the majority of His Majesty's Judges never do inflict it?

MR. GLADSTONE: I acted entirely as my predecessor did.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: But did not Sir Matthew White Ridley state that he considered every case before the flogging was inflicted and was very thankful that he had done so?

MR. GLADSTONE: I understand that he only considered those cases in which appeals were made.

Remission of Flogging Sentences.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sentences of flogging for robbery with violence were remitted from July, 1895 till October, 1900; and how many sentences of flogging for that crime were remitted between December, 1905, and the present time.

MR. GLADSTONE: So far as I can ascertain, there were five cases of remission in 1899, and four in 1900. All these, except two, were cases where the prisoner was ordered to be flogged more than once, and where the second or third flogging was remitted, not because of any question as to the propriety of the conviction, but solely because of the objection to such repeated punishments. There have been no remissions since 1905; but I may add that there have been no cases in which a prisoner has been ordered to be flogged more than once. During the years 1906 and 1907, seven persons were sentenced to corporal punishment for robbery with violence, but in none of these cases was any application made to me by the prisoner with regard to his sentence.

Railway Passengers' Bicycles.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the Departmental Committee on Railway Rates will be prepared to consider the question of passengers, bicycles being included in the statutory allowance of luggage as in other countries.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): I presume my hon. friend refers to the Railway Conference at present considering certain general questions relating to railway traffic and organisation. I doubt if the Conference will be prepared to take up the subject of rates and conditions of carriage of particular articles.

Practices of Insurance Societies.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is now in a position to announce his decision with regard to an inquiry into or legislation dealing with the practices of insurance societies, friendly societies, and kindred organisations.

MR. CHURCHILL: I do not feel convinced at present that the best way to deal with the matter would be by a formal inquiry. Such a course might cause unnecessary apprehension and tend without any sufficient cause to disturb the confidence of the insuring public. The Board of Trade have, however, been in communication with the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies, who is issuing a notice to collecting societies, pointing out the recent decisions in the Courts in regard to insurable interest, with a view to steps being taken to comply with the law. I propose to adopt a similar course towards industrial assurance companies.

Atherton Railway Disaster.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will state what results have attended the representations made to railway companies on the subject of the medical examination of engine-drivers, following upon Colonel Yorke's Report upon the accident near Atherton.

MR. CHURCHILL: The companies inform me that, generally speaking, enginemen are medically examined on entering the service, after illness or injury, and in any other case where the superior officer thinks it desirable. They add that they recognise that the subject is an important one, and that it will continue to receive their attention. The question is one of difficulty, and the Board of Trade is bound to consider the various and conflicting interests which are involved.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL asked if the attention of the right hon. Gentleman had been drawn to the case of the engine-driver who a few days ago dropped dead on his engine?

MR. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne) inquired if much irritation was not caused by the various standards of medical examination, and if the Board of Trade would be willing to set up one standard on its own authority?

MR. CHURCHILL replied that he was aware of the conflicting views, but he did not think the Board would be justified in making any new departure at present. The matter would be considered.

Lapsed Insurance Policies.

MR. JOWETT (Bradford, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will consider the advisability of calling for a Return from the various industrial assurance companies, showing the extent to which they have gained financially by reason of lapsed policies.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am advised that it would not be practicable to obtain the information asked for without statutory powers which the Board of Trade do not possess. I would, however, call attention to the fact that forfeiture cannot be incurred by any insured person except after due notice given in accordance with the provisions of Section 3 of the Collecting Societies and Industrial Assurance Companies Act, 1896.

Disputed Life Policies.

MR. JOWETT: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will endeavour to ascertain in regard to industrial assurance companies the number of policies for which premium has been paid up to the death of the insured person, the liability for which has been denied by the companies concerned, and the total value of such policies.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am considering what steps can be taken to obtain fuller information on this subject. It does not appear from the hon. Member's Question whether he is concerned solely with refusals to pay on the ground that the insurer had no insurable interest, or whether he desires information as to the total number of policies the liability for which is denied on any grounds. Perhaps he will be so good as to write to me on this point.

British Representatives Abroad.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will give a Return showing the number and the dates of their appointment of the consuls and trade representatives accredited to the various foreign countries and self-governing Colonies for each year since 1897.

MR. CHURCHILL: The hon. Member will find the information in regard to the consuls in the Foreign Office List. Since 1897 four trade correspondents have been appointed in South Africa, six in Australia, and three in New Zealand, all remunerated by fees. I am now considering the appointment of a salaried trade agent in each of the self-governing Colonies.

Marine Department, Survey Staff Clerks.

MR. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that there are about thirty men, known as survey staff clerks, employed in the London and outport offices of the Marine Department, and that the average service of these clerks is about seventeen years, whilst some have a record of thirty years service; and whether, in view of their eligibility, after only six years service, for promotion to Second Division clerkships under the Order in Council, dated 29th November, 1898, he will ascertain why no such promotions have yet been made; and whether he will see that the total absence of promotion in this respect is redressed by filling future vacancies for Second Division clerkships in his Department from amongst these men.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am aware of the facts stated in the first part of the Question. The clerks to the surveyors form a separate class, and I am informed that there have been very few opportunities of promoting them to the Second Division. One clerk was transferred to the Board of Trade and afterwards promoted to the Second Division, and the possibility of making further promotions under the terms of the Order in Council as occasion arises will not be overlooked.

Rhymney Valley Postmen's Pay.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General when it was decided that the postmen in the Rhymney Valley were to be placed in the fifth class; and whether some of these men have already signed the official papers by which they have accepted service in the fifth class.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): As I informed the hon. Member on the 30th ult. it has not as yet been possible definitely to decide into which classes the sub-offices in the Rhymney Valley should be placed. They were placed provisionally in Class V. in the announcement made to the Staff in the Post Office Circular of the 14th February, 1908. At the same time the staff were informed that the arrangement was provisional.

Transmission of Valuable Articles by Post.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is now prepared to offer the same facilities as those afforded by most of the Continental Post Offices for the despatch of registered boxes, of manageable dimensions, containing jewellery and other articles of value.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: This matter has been under my consideration for some time, and I hope to be able soon to commence the service experimentally with one or two of the nearer Continental countries.

Knightsbridge Work.

MR. HORNIMAN (Chelsea): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General why the work now being executed at St. George's Place and Knightsbridge was not commenced earlier in the year; whether the work is now being carried on night and day, and when the same will be completed.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The work was to have been begun as long ago as 2nd April, but unfortunately, through a misunderstanding on the part of one of the engineers, the necessary formal consent had not been obtained from the Corporation of Westminster. The work is being carried on night and day, and will be finished, I hope, by the end of the month.

Canadian Pacific Route to Japan.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he is aware that passengers booking through passages by the Canadian and Canadian Pacific route to Japan, by steamer leaving Liverpool on 29th May, have at the last moment been informed that owing to the action of the Post Office the connecting steamer from Vancouver to Japan has been postponed for a fortnight; and what was the reason for subjecting these passengers to such inconvenience, and for thus discouraging the all-British route to the advantage of foreign services.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am not aware what information has been given by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to intending passengers; but I may state that arrangements have been made for the institution of a mail service to Japan via Canada every three weeks during the summer months instead of every four weeks; and as a consequence the mails which under the former arrangements would have left Vancouver on the

8th June in connection with the sailing from Liverpool on the 29th instant will leave Vancouver on the 3rd June in connection with a sailing from Liverpool on the 22nd instant. The next despatch from Liverpool will be on the 12th June.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: Would it not have been possible to issue a statement for the information of passengers?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I thought the company would have done so.

MR. BRIDGEMAN: When did the Post Office make the change?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: It has been under negotiation a considerable time. It was, as a matter of fact, proposed by the company itself.

Tube Messengers at the Central Telegraph Office.

MR. MYER: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he has now considered the possibility of reducing the number of hours of attendance of the tube messengers employed at the Central Telegraph Office, as promised on the 6th January, 1907, in reply to a memorial from that staff submitted nearly two years ago.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I hope shortly to be in a position to announce my decision in this matter.

Postage to Morocco.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can now give any information with regard to the postal facilities with Morocco, having in view the fact that the French, German, and other foreign countries have a postage of about 1d. per ounce, while the British, who still retain more than half of the trade, have to pay 2½d.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am not at present in a position to make an announcement on the subject.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: As the matter has been under inquiry since the 26th March last, cannot the right hon. Gentleman indicate some date for the announcement?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am in communication with the Treasury. No decision has yet been come to and I am afraid it will not be for some time.

Cable Communication with the Colonies.

MR. CARLILE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can now state what are the arrangements which have been made in order to increase the cable communications between the Mother Country and the various self-governing Colonies.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: No recent arrangements have been made in order to increase the cable communications between the Mother Country and the various self-governing Colonies, nor have any of the Colonies proposed that such arrangements should be made.

MR. CARLILE: Is the subject under consideration?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: There has been no suggestion thrown out as yet.

Bicycles and the Passenger Duty.

MR. W. THORNE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether receipts by railway companies from passengers, who are not allowed to take their bicycles with them by certain trains, are liable to passenger duty.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): Yes, if they are in other respects chargeable.

Marquess of Waterford's Wicklow Estate.

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Blackditches, county Wicklow, estate of the Marquess of Waterford has been sold, or is about to be sold, to the tenants; whether the tenants of the estate, including Mrs. Mary Cullen, evicted in 1882, are to be reinstated; and, if not, will Mrs. Cullen and the other evicted tenants be provided with farms on the estate or elsewhere; and whether there is any untenanted land on the Blackditches property of the Marquess of Waterford.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): No proceedings for the sale of this estate are pending before the Estates Commissioners, and no application for reinstatement has been received from Mrs. Cullen. The Commissioners are not aware that there is any untenanted land on the property.

Arrests for Unlawful Assembly at Athlone.

Mr. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at three o'clock on the morning of the 6th May the police in the Athlone district of county Roscommon arrested a number of persons on a charge of unlawful assembly connected with the letting of some grazing lands, and detained these persons in the police barracks for several hours; whether he can state why these persons could not have been proceeded against by way of summons, and, if not, why they were not arrested at a less inconvenient hour; whether he is aware of the character of the evidence against them and of the fact that it was denied by the defendants; whether, under the circumstances, he will cause to be cancelled the bail bonds into which they were compelled to enter; whether he is aware that during the proceedings it transpired that Sergeant M'Elroy had three times endeavoured to induce a man named Burke to apply against the county for compensation for alleged injury to a heifer; and whether it is any portion of the duty of the police to work up claims of this character against the ratepayers of the country.

Mr. BIRRELL: The persons in question were arrested at five o'clock in the morning, with the exception of one who was arrested at four o'clock. The police considered it desirable to make the arrests early in the morning in order to avoid the possibility of disturbance. It is not the practice to proceed in such cases by way of summons. The defendants were taken before the Resident Magistrate at 10.30, being thus given a sufficient interval to obtain breakfast and employ legal aid. I cannot enter into any question as to the sufficiency of the evidence, nor have I power to cancel the recognisances. Sergeant M'Elroy denies having attempted to induce Burke to make a claim for compensation; he merely visited Burke, in accordance with the usual practice, in order to ascertain whether any claim for compensation was being made.

Ulster Land Tenancies.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he could state the number of acres of land held under the eleven months system in Ulster, giving details according to county divisions; and whether he could state the number of persons in each county in Ulster who hold land under this system, and the acreage in each case.

Mr. BIRRELL: I would refer the hon. Member to the House of Commons Return No. 250 of 1906, which gives details of the untenanted land in every rural district in Ireland. The Government have no information as to what quantity of this land may be held under the eleven months system, nor am I aware of any means, short of an exhaustive investigation over the entire country, by which that information could be obtained.

Clancarty Estate, Ballinasloe.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the cause of delay in giving the grass lands upon the Clancarty estate, near Ballinasloe, to the tenants as promised.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have estimated a price for the untenanted land on the estate in question, and it is proposed that this land should be allotted to the tenants on the estate and sold to them with their holdings. The purchase agreements for the tenants' holdings have only now been lodged, and the sale therefore cannot be sanctioned for a considerable time to come. The Commissioners cannot deal with the untenanted land apart from the tenanted.

Lord Ormathwaite's North Kerry Estate.

Mr. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Lord Ormathwaite has agreed to sell his estate in North Kerry to the tenants and also agrees to have evicted tenants put back into their evicted farms; and whether the Estates Commissioners will immediately reinstate Thomas Walsh, an evicted tenant on this estate, who has been on the roadside for over twenty years, and other tenants as well.

The hon. Member further asked if, seeing that the landlord had now agreed to sell to the tenants, there was any reason why the Estates Commissioners should not reinstate these men at once, especially in the cases where the holdings are vacant.

MR. BIRRELL: I will inquire into that. The Estates Commissioners made an offer in 1906, for the purchase of the holding from which Thomas Walsh had been evicted, but the offer was refused by the owner. The Commissioners now propose to acquire compulsorily certain land on the estate, and if they should do so they will consider the question of providing Walsh with a holding on the land so acquired.

Mr. Jeremiah Keane's Ballynooneen Holding.

MR. FLAVIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Mr. Jeremiah Keane, of Listowel, has offered for sale to the Estates Commissioners his non-residential holding at Ballynooneen, North Kerry, for division amongst the labourers and the enlargement of small holdings; whether the land has been inspected and reported upon; and whether an offer has been made by the Estates Commissioners to Keane, and, if not, when will it be made.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners have had an inspection made of the farm held by Mr. Keane, and have informed the landlord that if he procures the surrender of the holding they will make an advance of £542 for it as untenanted land to be distributed according to a scheme to be approved by the Commissioners. The landlord has signified his willingness to accept this offer, but upon the condition that the sale of the remainder of his estate should be proceeded with at once. With a view to the consideration of this condition, the Commissionsrs have called upon their inspector for a report upon the estate generally.

MR. FLAVIN said he believed the landlord had already sold the whole of his estate.

MR. BIRRELL: That does not accord with my information.

Ballylongford Untenanted Lands.

MR. FLAVIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state if Mr. J. D. Crosbie has offered for sale to the Estates Commissioners his untenanted land situated near Ballylongford, North Kerry; if so, when was it offered for sale; when was it inspected and reported upon; and whether, in view of the number of small holdings and labourers in the district, as well as some evicted tenants, the Estates Commissioners will acquire this land as soon as possible.

MR. BIRRELL: Proceedings for the sale to the Estates Commissioners of Mr. J. D. Crosbie's estate, comprising both tenanted and untenanted land, were instituted in March, 1907. The estate was inspected and the report of the inspection was received on 28th March last. The Commissioners will proceed with the case as soon as possible, but they are obliged to have regard to the priority of other cases.

MR. FLAVIN: This is a very small estate; surely the evicted tenants here might be reinstated immediately.

MR. BIRRELL: I am afraid that the delay in dealing with these transactions has been so great that we cannot ignore the claims of priority in the matter of inquiry.

Colthurst Estate, Ballyvourney.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, if he can state the nature of the 448 acres of untenanted land on the Colthurst estate at Ballyvourney; how much of this is woodland; what extent has been let for grazing purposes, and what area, if any, could be utilised for distribution amongst the labourers and small landholders in the district; will he state what is the extent of the plots in the village of Ballyvourney; are there any tenancies in these, and could they be made available for the purposes of The Labourers Act, 1906; and whether there is any untenanted land in the neighbourhood of the home farm at any time let to Jeremiah Hegarty as a grazing letting, and, if so, has this been acquired by the Estates Commissioners.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners are not at present in a position to add anything to the Answer which I gave to the hon. Member's Question on the 18th instant, but they will direct their inspector to inquire in due course into the matters of detail mentioned in the present Question.

Cattle Driving Prosecution at Mount Bellew.

Mr. JOHN ROCHE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, at an open court held in Mount Bellew, in the county of Galway, on 28th April last, the magistrates refused to allow witnesses to be examined in cases against Thomas Connor and Matt Fahy, when applications were made to estreat their recognisances, though their solicitor denied the truth of the complaint, and demanded that evidence should be heard on both sides; whether such refusal to hear witnesses was in accordance with Section 20 of the Petty Sessions Act; whether Section 34 of the Petty Sessions Act, dealing with recognisances, was complied with; whether, seeing that no special form of proof of such non-performance is provided by statute, the ordinary proof must be given as provided by Section 20 of the Petty Sessions Act, and evidence heard on both sides; whether he is aware that the magistrates admitted in evidence, as proof of the non-performance of the conditions of the recognisances, certificates of such non-performance signed by one magistrate at the foot of the recognizances dated 31st March, 1907, though no offence or conviction was proved; what jurisdiction had the magistrates to admit such certificates in evidence as proof of the non-performance of the conditious referred to; what order, if any, did the magistrates make on this occasion; and, considering all the circumstances of the case, will he take steps, if fines were imposed, to have these fines remitted or else very much reduced.

Mr. BIRRELL: On 2nd November, 1907, Thomas Connor and Matthew Fahy were charged with cattle-driving, and were bound over, with sureties, to keep the peace and be of good behaviour for twelve months. On 27th March, 1908, they were again charged with cattle-driving, and the resident magistrate, holding the case to be proved, certified in due form on the recognisances the non-performance of the condition, and again ordered the defendants to find sureties for a fresh period of twelve months. On 28th April an application to estreat the first recognisances was made to the magistrates at Petty Sessions. The magistrates unanimously held that the certificates of forfeiture on the original recognisances were binding on the Court, and they declined to go into any other evidence of breach of the condition of the recognisances. They accordingly ordered the recognisances to be estreated in the sum of £2 each in the case of the principal parties, and £1 each in the case of the sureties. The question whether the magistrates were right in their interpretation of the Acts bearing upon the case is one for the decision of a higher Court, and it is not for me to express any opinion upon it. It was open to Connor and Fahy to appeal against the order estreating their recognisances.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Can the right hon. Gentleman state whether the magistrate who made the order estreating the recognisances was the one who made the original commitment?

Mr. BIRRELL: I will inquire.

Shillelagh Mails.

Mr. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that letters coming by the second mail from Dublin to Shillelagh are detained in Rathdrum from 8 a m. until the following morning; that the Dublin papers are not delivered in Ballinglen until the day after publication, although delivered at the other stations on the Shillelagh line; can he explain why the Ballinglen district is so inconvenienced by the present arrangements; and will he see that in future letters and papers are dropped at Ballinglen by the train which drops the mails at Aughrim and other stations on the same line.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I have called for a report on this subject, and when I have received the necessary information I will send the hon. Member a reply.

Ireland and the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the appointment of the right hon. Member for Carnarvon to be Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland, notified in the *Dublin Gazette* of the 12th May, was made in consequence of the provisions of Section 14 of the Act of 1816, consolidating the Exchequers of Great Britain and Ireland; if so, who is the second of such Commissioners; and whether, seeing that Section 14 of the Act of 1816 provides that such Commissioners are to be in addition to the number of Commissioners which may now by law be appointed for executing the office of Treasurer of the Exchequer of Great Britain, the number of the Commissioners for Ireland is in addition to the number for Great Britain.

MR. HOBHOUSE: My right hon. friend was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer of Ireland under the Act 4, George IV., cap. vii., which prescribes that the offices of Chancellor of the Exchequer of Great Britain and Ireland respectively shall be held by the same person. The powers given by Section 14 of the Act of 1816 have not been exercised for many years.

MR. HAZLETON: Why have the powers of this section not been enforced?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I am not responsible for what preceded my appointment to my present office. Therefore I cannot answer the Question, I am afraid.

Unclaimed Bank Balances.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state if the Bank of England has a complete record of the unclaimed balances lying to the credit of depositors since the establishment of the Bank; if so, whether he can state the total amount; and, if not, whether he can state the total amount within the past 100 years; whether any interest has been placed to the credit of the unclaimed balances; and whether he can state the total cash value in the same period of bank notes issued by the Bank of England but not presented for repayment.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The Bank of England in relation to its private customers is in the same position as any other bank, and the Treasury is not entitled to call for information as to the accounts of those customers. The Bank of England allows no interest on deposits. The treatment of Bank of England notes which have remained outstanding for more than forty years is dealt with by Section 6 of the Bank Act, 1892, under which Returns are annually presented to Parliament. I have no information as to the amount of outstanding notes beyond that which is contained in these Returns. The Bank is always liable to pay a genuine note on presentation, whatever its date of issue.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: The hon. Gentleman has not stated the total amount that the Bank of England has drawn from these sources in the last 100 years?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I have stated that the Treasury is not entitled to call for information as to the accounts of the customers.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Is it a fact that the Bank of England has no more moral claim to these balances than the man in the moon, and as the joint stock banks of the country are carrying on the same practice and making a handsome profit out of it, does not the hon. Gentleman think that it is time that somebody stepped in?

[No Answer was returned.]

Sir Robert Holmes.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the late Treasury Remembrancer, Sir Robert Holmes, had still a year to serve in his office before he could be retired under the 65 rule; whether he had, before he resigned his office, accepted a directorship of the Bank of Ireland; whether this was contrary to the regulations of the Civil Service; and whether the fact that this resignation had been received or tendered was not announced to the public, in order to keep the applications for the office confined to a small area of Treasury clerks.

MR. HOBHOUSE: Sir Robert Holmes will attain the age of sixty-five in December next. He intimated to the Treasury in March last his desire to resign, and he was only retained in office after his election as a director of the Bank of Ireland until his successor could be appointed. It is not usual to announce such resignations to the public; and there is no foundation for the suggestion in the last paragraph of the Question.

MR. MOONEY: Did Sir Robert Holmes, while still a Civil servant, inform the Treasury that he had accepted the appointment of a director of the Bank of Ireland, or did the Treasury first get the information from an outside source and call on him to resign the Remembrancership?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I understand that Sir Robert himself communicated to the Treasury the fact of his election, and they did not first learn it from an outside source.

MR. MOONEY: Did he inform the Treasury of his intention to become a director before his actual appointment?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I understand that he did so.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is there not a distinct rule in the Civil Service precluding any Civil servant from becoming a director of a public company? Why was Sir Robert allowed to remain after he had accepted such a position?

MR. HOBHOUSE: He only remained for the convenience of winding up the business of his office, and then it was for but a fortnight.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: When Mr. MacCartney was appointed Deputy Master of the Mint he had to resign his directorship on the London and North Western Railway at once.

The Official Secrets Bill.

MR. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if, in view of the controversial character of the Official Secrets Bill and the prospective congestion of business, the Government intend to introduce the Bill in this House.

MR. ASQUITH: The Official Secrets Bill has already been introduced into the House of Lords.

MR. BELLAIRS: My Question refers to the House of Commons.

MR. ASQUITH: And I have replied that the Bill has already been introduced into the other House.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): When it comes down to this House, having regard to the extaordinary provisions contained in it, will the right hon. Gentleman take care there is ample opportunity for discussing it.

*MR. SPEAKER: That is a hypothetical Question.

Imperial Transport Organisation.

MR. CARLILE: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can lay upon the Table of the House the scheme, if any, which His Majesty's Ministers are prepared to suggest as suitable for increasing the transport organisation within the Empire.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not sure that I understand the hon. Member's Question. But so far as I do understand it I am not aware of any scheme of the kind being in contemplation.

*MR. CARLILE: Does the right hon. Gentleman propose to consider the question in view of the competition we are subjected to by foreign shipping subsidised by foreign Powers?

MR. ASQUITH: I do not think I can add to my Answer.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Is it not a fact that a very few years ago a Committee exhaustively inquired into the whole of this question? I will tell the hon. Member all about it.

[No Answer was returned.]

Sessional Arrangements.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will consider the advisability of so arranging the business of the Session each year that the House may be enabled to rise for the recess not later than the end of June.

MR. ASQUITH : If we can succeed in arranging our business, as I hope we may, so as to rise for the recess in July, I think that is as great a change as we can at present propose, or as will be found consistent with the general convenience.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND : Is the right hon. Gentleman in a position to state what particular portion of July ?

MR. ASQUITH : I think it will be very near the end. (Cries of " Which end ?")

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND : I hope the right hon. Gentleman will so arrange it that it will not be at any rate after July 12.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. AKERS-DOUGLAS (Kent. St. Augustine's) : In asking the Prime Minister a question as to the course of business next week, may I be allowed to express a hope that, inasmuch as peculiar interest attaches to the Budget Resolutions this year, seeing that provision for old-age pensions is included, the right hon. Gentlemen will give the House more than Monday for their consideration ?

MR. ASQUITH said that the Income Tax Resolution would be taken on Monday, and he hoped they might come to a conclusion on it on that evening. There would be ample opportunity for again discussing the matter on the Second Reading and on the Committee stage of the Finance Bill, and also on the Old-Age Pension Bill itself. On Tuesday, the business would be the Sessional Order enabling the House to take the report of Money Resolutions after eleven o'clock, the report of the remaining Resolutions in Committee of Ways and Means, and the introduction of the Finance Bill ; and on Wednesday the Irish Universities expenses Resolution in Committee and a number of small Bills.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon) said there was a considerable desire on the part of many Gentlemen who represented county constituencies to raise a debate on the question of the absence of any provision in the Budget for the relief of local taxation, and, in the circumstances, as well as in view of the importance of the proposal as to old-age pensions, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to accede to the suggestion of his right hon. friend.

MR. ASQUITH said that with every desire to facilitate, and not curtail, discussion on these matters, he really did not think this was a request to which he ought to accede. The right hon. Gentleman would have the most ample opportunities for discussion on the Finance Bill.

SIR E. SASSOON was understood to ask if the Licensing Bill would be proceeded with before the Budget ?

MR. ASQUITH : No, Sir.

EDUCATION (LOCAL AUTHORITIES) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A. Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 152.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed [No. 152.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 233.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection : That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A, Mr. Rothschild ; and had appointed in substitution, Mr. Stanier.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee : That they had added to Standing Committee A the following Fifteen Members in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill) :—Mr. Younger, Sir Arthur Bignold, Sir Samuel Scott, Mr. James Mason, Viscount Castlereagh, Mr. Maddison, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Arnold Herbert, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Ainsworth, Mr. Lehmann, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Guy Wilson, and Mr. Gulland.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill), Mr. William Redmond; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill), Mr. Clancy.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

POOR LAW AMENDMENT (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To simplify the mode of raising the assessment for the Poor in Scotland," presented by Captain Waring; supported by Mr. Williamson and Mr. James Murray; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 234].

CONTEMPTS OF COURT.

*The ATTORNEY-GENERAL for IRELAND (Mr. Cherry, Liverpool, Exchange) said that, in asking leave to introduce a Bill to amend the law as to contempt of Court, he desired to state the circumstances which had led him to introduce the Bill and the reasons which induced him to look for the general support of the House. It would be within the recollection of the House that a debate took place on the 10th March last on a Resolution moved by the hon. Member for South Kilkenny on the subject of contempt of Court, and that a Resolution condemning the present law and calling for its amending was adopted by a very large majority in the House. The only contentious or controversial matter which occurred during the progress of that debate arose from a reference made, both in the resolution and in the speeches of the hon. Members who proposed and seconded it, to one particular case, viz., that of the Member for North Westmeath, who was at the time undergoing a sentence of imprisonment for contempt of Court. The House was aware that that matter of controversy had now fortunately disappeared. Mr. Justice Ross, the Judge who sentenced the hon. Member for North Westmeath, had on his own motion, and without any pressure having been put upon him by the Government, or, so far as he was aware, by any person else, made an order releasing the hon. Member, on the ground that his health had suffered from his continued incarceration. He thought that whatever opinions hon. Members on both sides of the House held as to the particular action of the hon. Member for North Westmeath whether they approved or disapproved of his methods, they could all congratulate themselves on the fact that his imprisonment had now been terminated, and he thought they were all agreed that it reflected to the credit of the learned Judge that he took into account all the circumstances of the case and acted in a merciful manner in releasing the hon. Member before the term of his imprisonment had expired. However that might be, it removed the only subject of contention that arose, for during the progress of the debate on the 10th March there appeared to be, as far as he could judge, a unanimity of opinion on both sides of the House that the law in this respect required amendment. He mentioned in the course of his remarks that a Bill had been introduced in the House of Lords as far back as 1883, by the late Lord Selborne, which proposed to amend the law in several distinct respects. That Bill passed through the House of Lords without a division at any of its stages, came down to the House of Commons, was dropped owing to the want of time at the end of the session, and never passed into law. During the progress of the discussion it was suggested that a Bill enacting the main provisions of that Bill should be introduced, and that appeared to have been received with general favour in the House. The right hon. Gentleman, the junior Member for the University of Dublin, stated that he would have no objection to the provisions of that Bill being enacted provided that it applied not to Ireland alone, but to the whole country, meaning Ireland and England, and that statement was adopted by the late Chief Secretary for Ireland in a speech which he subsequently made, and at the conclusion of his speech he reiterated the view that had met with the general acceptation of the House, that the law required amendment, and that the provisions to which he had referred were in his opinion unobjectionable. He was happy to say that, having communicated with the highest legal authorities in England, his hon. and learned friend the

Attorney-General, the Lord Chief Justice, and the Lord Chancellor, they all agreed that although the matter was not one of very much importance in England, owing to the fact that committals for contempt of court were very rare, scarcely any having occurred in a recent period, the law might with advantage be amended, and that the provisions which he proposed to embody in the Bill would be a distinct improvement of the law. He therefore, with the concurrence of the Attorney-General, asked leave to introduce a Bill which would apply both to England and to Ireland, but not to Scotland, as he understood the law of Scotland on the subject was quite different, and as a matter of fact the Bill of 1883, although it applied to England and Ireland, did not apply to Scotland. The Bill he asked leave to introduce was with the exception of a few verbal changes owing to changes in the law introduced since 1883, a reproduction of the Bill of 1883, except that he omitted certain sections dealing with ecclesiastical offences. The occasion of the Bill of 1883 was the imprisonment of a clergyman of the Church of England, and one of the clauses dealt particularly with that matter. He did not desire to enter into these ecclesiastical matters, or to encumber the Bill by any reference to them, and therefore he had omitted any clauses dealing purely with ecclesiastical matters. There was another clause also dealing only with wards-of-court which he had omitted, because he did not think it necessary, but if there was any desire that it should be introduced he would be prepared to listen with favourable attention to any such proposal. The first clause of the proposed Bill provided that the maximum term of imprisonment to be imposed upon any person for any contempt of Court was three months, and that applied to Courts of all jurisdictions. The next clause dealt with fines and provided that the maximum fine to be imposed should be £500 in a Court of superior jurisdiction, and £20 in a Court of inferior jurisdiction. The third clause provided that no security was to be required by any Court to be given by any person against the continuance or repetition of any contempt of Court, but if there was a continuation or repetition of the contempt the person so offending would be liable to be imprisoned again for three months and to have a fine imposed on him with the same limit as the maximum amount. Other clauses provided that any person in custody at the time of the passing of the Act, if he had been in custody more than three months, was entitled to immediate release, and if a period of three months had not elapsed since his order for imprisonment, then on the expiration of three months from the date of his committal, he should similarly be entitled to release. Another provision of an important character was that, if in any case any person had suffered damage to himself or his estate by reason of any acts of any person guilty of contempt of Court, the Court might in addition to any fine or term of imprisonment, order the person so guilty of contempt to pay such damages as the Court might adjudge. There was a clause dealing with appeals, and providing that every order for imprisonment or imposing a fine, whether the contempt was of a civil or a criminal nature, was to be the subject of appeal in the same manner as any other order of the High Court. Those were the main provisions of the Bill which he asked leave to introduce. He begged to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the law relating to contempts of Court."—(*Mr. Cherry.*)

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL (Dublin University), said he did not propose to criticise the provisions of the Bill. He understood his right hon. friend to say that it was proposed to apply the Bill to England as well as to Ireland, and that the object was to impose a limitation both as to the amount of fine and as to the duration of imprisonment, and also to provide an appeal in the case of every committal for contempt. He was sure the House would be prepared to allow the Bill to be read a first time, but it was not to be understood that the attitude of the Opposition necessarily meant that they accepted all the details of the measure which they had not seen or had time to consider. The Bill seemed to be rather elaborate in its features, and more extensive and far-reaching than the legislation proposed in 1903. The only matter he would be inclined to criticise was the suggestion contained in the Bill that three months was to be the maximum penalty in the matter of imprisonment. It seemed to him, perhaps not so much in Ireland as in this country, that that would be a very cheap alternative for a defaulting trustee to pay if, by going to prison for three months, he could retain a trust estate of large dimensions. He gathered, however, from the statement of his right hon. friend that there was a power in the event of continuing contempt to repeat the sentence, and that would perhaps meet the case.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland, Mr. Birrell, and Mr. Attorney-General.

Bill "To amend the Law relating to Contempts of Court," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 235.]

SUPPLY [7th ALLOTTED DAY].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

CLASS III.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,978, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Office of the Irish Land Commission."

*MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway E.) called attention to the serious situation which had arisen on the Clanricarde estates owing to the opposition to, or rather the defeat of, the Evicted Tenants Bill of last year—in fact he might add the defeat of all previous legislation passed by the House in its desire to settle the land question. In order that the House might understand the present position he would refer to the history of the case. The origin of the trouble on the estate arose out of the failure of the crops in 1885. That was not confined to the Clanricarde estates alone. The effects were felt all over the western seaboard of Ireland. The tenants approached their landlords with the request that they should contribute something in the shape of a temporary abatement of the rents then due, to enable them to tide over the difficulty with which they were faced. He was pleased to be able to state that the poorer landlords almost without exception met their tenants in a fair and conciliatory spirit, with the result that peace and harmony prevailed on these estates at the present moment. Clanricarde did not even acknowledge the memorial of the tenants. The first acknowledgment they had from him were writs from the Superior Court for the rents. The amount then due would not be equal to the cost incurred in obtaining the judgments in the Superior Court. At the time there was no such thing as a plan of campaign in Ireland at all. It was not mentioned for twelve months afterwards, and he had no hesitation in saying that no man living was more responsible for the plan of campaign programme than Clanricarde himself. Having got these judgments he proceeded to evict the poor tenants on the 19th August, 1885. A large force of police was drafted into the place and the people naturally resented the evictions. They collected in large numbers and when the sheriff appeared at the houses of the tenants about to be evicted the tenants offered him rents due in full, and in addition, the costs which would have been incurred by Clanricarde if he had proceeded in the ordinary way before the County Court. The sheriff had no power to accept anything short of a pound of flesh, and between 19th and 27th August the houses of the tenants were captured by the enemy. There were between 500 and 600 police and soldiers on the scene for nine or ten days and the House could imagine the enormous expense incurred by the State in connection with these evictions, in order that Clanricarde might wreak his vengeance and vindictiveness on the unhappy tenants. Sir Michael Hicks Beach, now Lord St. Aldwyn, who was Chief Secretary at the time, in an interview with Clanricarde's agent pointed out the difficulty and trouble that would arise in future evictions and urged that Clanricarde should recognise the claims of the poor tenants as the poorer landlords had done throughout the length and breadth of the country. The correspondence was published in the Journals of the House. The then Chief Secretary distinctly stated that unless the claims of the tenants were recognised and concessions made similar to those made by other landlords, the forces of the Government if required by Clanricarde in future would not be given for the work. That had no effect, and Joyce retired. Then the present man, a bankrupt, came down and took up the job. Evictions went on until they reached the number of 170. During all the time the tenants never ceased to display their willingnes to come to a reasonable settlement. He might also mention that Lord Eversley, then a prominent member of the Gladstone Government, sought to interfere and went down to the district with the object of holding a demonstration. On the eve of the demonstration, Lord Clanricarde at last recognised claims made by the tenants; but only to this extent, that if the tenants paid every shilling of arrears due up to date, they would receive 20 per cent. off the last half-year's rent. It was needless to say that it was impossible for the tenants to accept those conditions. After all the misery and expense that was incurred, halting legislation was taken up in this House, with the result of which they were all conversant. All the legislation of the past had not been of the value of a fraction of a penny to the tenants on the Clanricarde estates. The Land Bill of 1903 was introduced and promises were made by the Government of the day that that Bill would be calculated to settle the entire agrarian trouble in Ireland, and particularly that the congested districts in the western portion would be dealt with in a generous spirit and that the evicted tenants would be restored to the land. But under that Bill when it became law not a solitary evicted tenant on the Clanricarde Estates had been reinstated or derived a fraction of benefit whatever from it. So passed four years and then another Bill was introduced, known as the Evicted Tenants Bill. The present Chief Secretary for Ireland in introducing the Bill described it as "a measure to enable both Houses of Parliament to keep faith with the Irish people within the terms of the Land Conference and to affect the speedy restoration of the evicted tenants to their holdings." But he did not rest his case on the description of the Bill entirely on the statement of the Chief Secretary. In another place the Earl of Mayo, who had been a member of the Land Conference, said that—

> "it was essential that a good understanding should be arrived at."

Now, he asked, was there any man in the House who believed for one moment that the Land Bill of 1903 would ever have been placed on the Statute-book had it not been for the faith that those promises and that understanding which the hon. Members on those benches accepted would be honourably kept? Lord Lansdowne said on the Second Reading—

> "We are pledged to a measure of reinstatement of some kind. If you throw out the Bill it will be said that you have receded from the kind of undertaking which we arrived at in 1903."

The Earl of Arran in the same debate said—

> "The reinstatement of the evicted tenants is to bring the spirit of peace to the tenants of Ireland. Let every evicted tenant be reinstated so long as that is not done at the expense of injustice to anybody else."

Before he sat down he would show that there was not the slightest intention of doing injustice to anybody. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Dublin in the debate in February last on the Bill in the House of Commons said that—

> "it had been contended that the settlement of the evicted tenants was part of the agreement of 1903,"

and the right hon. Gentleman went on to define that agreement and to say—

> "There can be no doubt whatever that in the interests not merely of these unfortunate people themselves, but in the interests of the successful working of the great Purchase Act, their reinstatement was looked upon as an essential element."

The Evicted Tenants Act was passed by the Commons. It went to the House of Lords where it was mutilated almost beyond recognition, so that the Irish Members could not accept any responsibility for it. It was, however, accepted by the Government, and it raised the hopes of the people on the Clanricarde estate, who believed that the Estates Commissioners would have compulsory powers to acquire land for their settlement. The Commissioners then set to work and sent down inspectors to inquire into the condition of the estate. As he (Mr. Roche) and his friends had foreseen, it was found that, with one exception, the planters welcomed the the Bill, and desired that it should begin to operate immediately—the exception being that of a man who had been given a post as bailiff and gatekeeper on the estate, with a large salary. The Commissioners proceeded to acquire holdings, and that moment Clanricarde objected. The case was tried before Judge Wylie. The planters as well as the tenants were represented in the Court, desiring a settlement. The Judge decided on behalf of the Commissioners and planters. Clanricarde appealed, and while the appeal was pending he himself received letters from several planters begging him to use whatever influence he possessed with the Commissioners, to hurry them up and take the land from them, to allow them to go out with the compensation provided for in the Act, and permit the new tenants to come in. And they stated that one of the reasons for this request was that it was spring, the time for sowing the crops. The planters added that they themselves were not going to grow any crops that year, and unless the new tenants were let in the arable parts of the land would be valueless and become derelict that year. Upon receiving that letter he put a Question in the House which was answered last April. The Answer was that the matter was pending in the Court of Appeal and until the Court decided the Commissioners could take no further action. The Court of Appeal decided last week. Clanricarde seemed to be very fortunate when he appealed to the Court of Appeal. This was not the first time he had gone to the Court to upset the finding of the Judge. He knew nothing of the gentlemen who formed the Court of Appeal, and he cared less, but after their decision he held it was the duty of the Government at once to take up this question and give effect to a Bill which would put the matter right. The Massarene estate was to some extent on the same lines as the Clanricarde estate. Evictions took place and new tenants were placed on the land. But let the Committee contrast the difference between the two. On the Massarene estate the clauses of the Land Bill and the Evicted Tenants Bill were allowed to operate, with the result that the planters had gone, the old tenants had come in, and £7,400 of Irish State money had been expended on the operation which had restored peace and harmony on that estate. On the Clanricarde estate both planter and evicted were shut out by the decision of Court of Appeal. They were dealing with a cruel and relentless creature whom most of them had never seen since he inherited the estate thirty-five years ago. Since then he had never been in Ireland. He did not even return on the death of his mother, and his sister had to protect the family vault from exposure at her own expense. Any one who would study the history of this estate for the last thirty years would find across its face a trail of blood and tears. One of Clanricarde's agents was shot in the open day. Naturally such an event excited a great deal of attention and comment, most of it unfavourable to Clanricarde, who vilified his agent. The agent's wife took proceedings in the Courts to vindicate the character and honour of her husband, and what did Clanricarde do? He met her action by an appeal to the Court for an injunction and restrained her from publishing the letter which would have vindicated the honour of her husband. Clanricarde attempted to play the same game with Blake Joyce, who came in after. But Joyce took proceedings, and the Court recognised his claim and awarded him damages. But, of course, the convenient Court of Appeal to which Clanricarde then went reversed the judgment. Such was the character of the man whose victims, through their representatives in this House, appealed to the representatives of a free people and implored them to stay the hand of this cruel and relentless creature, and send them a message of hope that they might know that a brighter future was in store for them. He begged to move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Whereupon Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,878, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. John Roche*).

*Mr. LARDNER (Monaghan, N.) said that in supporting the Motion of his hon. friend he would, he was afraid, have to trouble the Committee with some figures. Towards the end of last year the Evicted

Tenants Bill was passed into law, and the feeling of this House was one of gratitude, of joy that there was a possibility of peace being brought to one of the most unfortunate classes of the Irish community. But a fortnight before the measure was introduced the Estates Commissioners issued a special Report of all their proceedings up to 31st May, 1907, in respect of persons applying as evicted tenants for restoration to their holdings. That Report showed that 8,401 applications had been received, 6,143 had been inquired into and reported on, and 2,935 had been rejected on one of eight grounds, none of which were in any case disclosed. Up to the 31st May, 1907, 1,033 tenants had been provided for either by restoration to their old holdings or to others, 946 had been restored to their old holdings, and eighty-seven to new holdings that had been provided for them. The Commissioners also reported that they had not been able to inquire into or report on 2,658 applications up to that date, but they estimated that there would be 400 suitable applicants in this number, so that with the 1,609 reported cases there were at 31st May, 1907, over 2,000 evicted tenants to be reinstated, and that to that date, 31st May, 1907, 1,033 tenants had been reinstated or otherwise provided for. A few days since a Return authorised by Section 3 of the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Act was put at the disposal of this House, which disclosed a very strange state of affairs. It was a Return giving the particulars of all the tenants or the representatives of tenants who had been reinstated since the passing of the Act of 1903, in their holdings up to the 31st December, 1907. The figures showed that up to 31st May, 1,033 had been reinstated, whilst the total number reinstated up to the 31st December, according to the latter return, were 1,036. That was to say between June and December three tenants were reinstated. That would seem to show that the Act of last year had been a failure. There was no doubt after what they had heard from the hon. Gentleman who moved the reduction that it was a failure so far as the Clanricarde estate was concerned. He was not inclined to blame the Estates Commissioners for being unsympathetic or to blame them for any breach of duty, but he must say that he thought there was gross delay at the Commissioners' office. It might be due to want of sufficient staff or due to unsuitable office accommodation. But in Ireland there was this great public department carrying out the transfer of land to the tenants, fixing fair rents of the land which was not sold, collecting the interest on over £30,000,000 of land that had been purchased by the Land Commissioners, and in the six months from June to December they had only reinstated three tenants. The office was contained in five or six old houses, very like a Bloomsbury lodging-house. It was like a rabbit warren, one house opening into another, and boring from one room into another as the work increased. If a private business grew as had the work of the Estates Commissioners, the owner of that business instead of taking up one old house after another, would build himself a suitable office with adequate accommodation.

Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said so far as he was aware the provision of accommodation for the Land Commission was not included in the Vote.

THE CHAIRMAN said that the Vote referred to the work of the Land Commission, and if the members of the Commission were hampered in their work by inadequate office accommodation, it was not out of order to refer to it.

*Mr. LARDNER ventured respectfully to submit that one of the reasons why the work of the Land Commission was impeded and delayed was want of proper accommodation. They might be told that a most up-to-date office for the Examiners of Tills had been provided in Nassau Street. It certainly looked imposing, and when one went up in the lift one felt most unlegal, but if they wanted to get any business done they had better take up their abode there. The work of the Land Commission should be done in one building and under one control, in order that it might be done expeditiously and with proper attention. He was informed that the staff was not sufficient, and that the department was wholly undermanned. It was necessary that there should be an adequate staff if the 2,000 evicted tenants were to be reinstated within a reasonable period. He would like to show what was the process which had to be followed where an evicted tenant sought to be reinstated. Take the case of a tenant who had been evicted twenty years. He made his application for reinstatement, and he received a printed acknowledgment. Four or five months afterwards he was visited by a gentleman who sometimes came without notice and occasionally having previously notified his intention of coming. The evicted tenant had a chat with him, and they looked over the farm. After the lapse of another three or four months came a letter stating that the Commissioners had considered his application for reinstatement and had decided not to accede to the application. The unfortunate tenant wrote to ask "Why?" He got a reply that it had been decided to reject his application. "Why?" he again very properly asked. The reply he received was that it was not the practice of the Commissioners to disclose the grounds of their refusal. He objected to that method of procedure in the very strongest way, and he would, in this connection, like to read to the House the possible grounds of objection which might be raised against the application of an evicted tenant for reinstatement. There were eight in number, first, that the eviction had taken place over twenty-five years ago; second, that the applicant was a herd or a caretaker; third, that he voluntarily sold or surrendered his farm; fourth, that he lost the holding through creditors or through family disputes; fifth, that he was unsuitable to work the land by reason of age or infirmity, or want of farming experience and habits of industry, or he was incompetent for other reasons; sixth, that he was not a *bona fide* evicted tenant, or representative of a *bona fide* evicted tenant; seventh, that the applicant was not an evicted tenant but a defaulting annuitant for a purchased farm; and lastly, that the applicant had at the present time a holding sufficient for his requirements. Now, under 4 and 5 the claim of any evicted tenant for reinstatement, no matter how strong his case was, might be rejected if an inspector was unfriendly to the applicant. He did not wish to say that the Commissioners had abused or would abuse their powers, but they were relying on the report of an inspector who probably had only one short interview with the applicant. Then take the case of a hostile landlord who did not want to see evicted tenants restored to their holdings. He plied the Commissioners with letters stating the bad qualities of the man, that he was not industrious, not sober, that he was old and infirm, incompetent, or that there were other reasons against him which an agent could very easily find. The tenant never heard of these communications; possibly a poor and illiterate man, out of his farm for years, living by his daily earning without means to enable him to get professional assistance to prosecute his claim. He did not think that was right. He claimed in the very strongest way that the applicant for reinstatement should be told the definite ground on which his application had been refused. He asked the Chief Secretary to see that the Commissioners in rejecting claims in the future, set out the plain grounds of the rejection; then the evicted tenant would know where he stood, and would have an opportunity of refuting, if he could, the statements made against him. An inspector went to look at a holding in the North of Ireland, and said he saw no reason why the evicted tenant should not be restored. His parting message was—"You had better send up a letter of character from the sergeant of police." He was sure that everyone in that House would be surprised to learn that the evicted tenant farmer had to depend upon a letter as to his character provided by a sergeant of police in order to get reinstated in his old holding. Then as to the delay in the payment of free grants. He had personal knowledge of a case in which an unfortunate woman had made application for a free grant, and though she had repeatedly renewed it, she had always received the reply that the matter was under consideration. He urged the Chief Secretary that the grants should be made at the time of the reinstatement, and should not be delayed. It was not conferring great benefit on a man to restore him to a farm which had deteriorated to the last degree, and had gone back to prairie condition. In the case of evicted farms which he knew, the buildings were in ruins, the fences destroyed, and the drains choked. Yet it was on such a farm that the unfortunate woman to whom he referred had been waiting anxiously for the last two years for this dole which would give her a fresh start in life. If the 2,000 tenants who were still on the road were to be sent back in our day, something must be done to strengthen the hands of the Commissioners and expedite their work. Remember the Evicted Tenants Bill of last year only operated for four years, and unless something was done which would enable the Commissioners to deal with the last champions of landlord tyranny, there was little hope of peace and prosperity for Ireland, or of the evicted tenants getting back to the homes they loved, to till the land which Providence intended them to cultivate and enjoy.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): I have listened with great respect and attention to the hon. Member for East Galway, who I know has done his best to try and secure peace and harmony. He speaks with knowledge and experience of the evicted tenants in his neighbourhood. The hon. Member dealt with what has happened to the Evicted Tenants Act of last session. I cannot say that I am very much surprised at the consequences, and of course I would be the last, having had the advantage of a legal training, to criticise, even if it were useful to do so, the reasons why the Court of Appeal in Ireland had occasion to reverse —I do not doubt they had good legal grounds for their view—the decision of the Court below. I am very glad that the provision in question was not part of the original Bill. It was introduced in the House of Lords, and I accepted it with profound reluctance, being indeed doubtful as to what construction might possibly be placed upon it by a Court of law. I was of two minds for a long time as to whether the Bill was worth having, subject to that condition. However, not having been very fortunate in my legislative efforts, I was desirous of seeing the Bill put upon the Statute-book, and I reluctantly consented to the proviso being added. The House will remember what the proviso was. A restriction was placed on the power of acquiring tenanted land by compulsion, and the proviso was that no tenanted land should be acquired compulsorily which was in the possession or occupation of a *bona fide* tenant using or cultivating the same as an ordinary farmer in accordance with proper methods of husbandry. The case of these *bona fide* tenants was pleaded with great vehemence by gentlemen opposite and also by noble Lords in another place, and we were charged with proposing a most tyrannous Act because it was suggested that we contemplated the turning out from his farm of a *bona fide* tenant who was unwilling to go. We pointed out that there was no probability of any such tyranny being exercised by the persons authorised to put the Act into force, but we were told that it was not for Parliament to rely at all on the discretion of outside authorities, but that it was its solemn duty to secure that no person being a *bona fide* farmer occupying a farm from which someone had been evicted should be turned out against his will. Of course everybody must feel there was a certain force in that contention, particularly those ignorant of the circumstances of the case and of the nature of the nobleman in question and his relations with his tenants. I will only read the observation that fell from the lips of Lord Lansdowne in the House of Lords to show that the view he took of this proviso was that it was simply to protect those planters, upright and struggling men, who had remained there for a great many years, who liked the holdings, were on good terms with their neighbours and did not want to go, and the proviso which was introduced in the House of Lords was introduced to secure these persons. This is the language which he used—

> "What is the difficulty which looms so large in the way of His Majesty's Government? They urge that a great many of these planters are men of straw, that they are 'caretakers,' and that the number of *bona fide* farmers who would come within our definition is a very small one. Very well. That shows, I think, that the difficulty which they will have to deal with is a very small difficulty, although the total number of cases is a large one. The 'caretakers,' the nondescripts, the birds of passage, will not be protected under the terms of our Amendment. Then there are other of these planter-tenants who no doubt will be perfectly willing to move elsewhere under the liberal inducements which are to be offered to them; those men are willing to go and need not be considered. What then remains? Only that *residuum*—that handful of courageous men—who are farming their land properly, who have their farms stocked, who are paying their rent and who wish to remain where they are. Those are the men you want to be able to turn out in order to make room for the agitators who have been concerned in the discreditable events of the last few years."

That is a frank, clear statement by the wielder of many legions in another place, and that showed clearly what the general view of this proviso was. It was to protect those tenants who were occupying farms from which the former holders had been evicted and who did not want to go. That was an argument difficult to resist. I do not think it was capable of being resisted by persons with a peculiar knowledge of the circumstances of the locality. As a general proposition it appealed to them that an honest man who was cultivating his farm well and did not want to go should not be turned out of his home and house where he had lived for years, and the Leader of the Opposition showed how undesirable and improper and unfair it was that such a man should be taken up by the root and sent away. Of course, that is not now the interpretation that the Court of Appeal has put upon the proviso. The interpretation they have put upon it is that if he is there cultivating his land properly he cannot be sent away, even though he is glad to go and has accepted the terms which are offered him. I remember visiting this place and quite accidentally I saw two or three of these planters. I was most careful, being, I trust, an honest man, to tell them that the Act secured to them the amplest protection, that they were under no obligation to go, and if they did not want to go they were protected and entitled to remain, and I certainly, not being altogether indifferent to courage where I have seen it, spoke to them in terms of encouragement in their attitude of doing what was best for themselves. I found them a little sore about the manner in which they had been brought there, and they thought they had not been treated quite fairly. I am bound to say they spoke in kindly terms of the parish priest, saying that he had always stood by them, and had done his very best to secure that they should not be exposed to the pains and penalties sometimes imposed on people adopting an unpopular cause in Ireland, and that although they had had at times to suffer some hardships their attitude generally towards their neighbours, although they were Protestants and had come from afar, was by no means an unkindly one. But they wanted to go; they had had enough of it, and Lord Lansdowne's view of the proviso, which he himself introduced, and insisted on, in another place, was that it was not intended to interfere with the settlement of this difficult question by the removal of those persons ready to go. So I say that, whilst in no way criticising the language of the law, we all of us know, who have ever had occasion to defend or attempt to explain an Act of Parliament in a Court of law, that it is of no use telling the Judge what the intentions of the framers were. They very properly will not allow you to read a speech, either of a Minister in charge of the Bill or of the hon. Gentleman opposite in charge of the Minister in charge of the Bill, or to make any reference whatever to the nature of the discussion. They say: "I can only read this Act of Parliament according to the laws of grammar." I will not trouble the House with the legal decisions, but they came quite clearly to the opinion—the three Judges in the Court of Appeal—that there was an insuperable obstacle placed upon the acquisition compulsorily of untenanted land if it was being held by a planter, *bona fide* carrying it on in accordance with the rules of husbandry. The moment you find that, you are powerless, and there it must remain; this Act, which we had hoped would become the means of conciliating, and of removing the difficulties in regard to Lord Clanricarde's tenants, is entirely powerless. I confess I am not wholly disposed to let the matter stop there. I think we all of us, both in this House and in another place, can have no other anxiety than to remedy our error. It may be our fault, the clumsiness of our expression, the hasty mode in which the negotiations were conducted between the two Houses, at the end of the session, but when there is not time to turn round, when you have to make up your minds in a few moments on the meaning of a proviso suddenly held at your head, and told that you must accept that or nothing, there is some excuse for the blunder which both Houses have made in this matter. I have had an opportunity of consulting with the Prime Minister, and, as the other place is not very much employed at the present time, I do not think it would be a bad plan, if we can, to introduce elsewhere a Bill of one clause—three or four words will make it perfectly plain that the transaction can be carried out without the consent of the landlord. I feel quite certain that when Lord Lansdowne is reminded of the language which he employed, language so exactly in accord with the wishes of us all, that measure will be accelerated in all its stages, and we shall be in the position before very long of not only having given effect to our wishes, but in such a legal form as will prevent them being made waste paper in any Court of Law. The Evicted Tenants Bill was received in this House very fairly indeed. We all remember the speech of the right hon. Member for South Dublin, and I am bound to confess that the whole of the debates were friendly. Let bygones be bygones. We do not want to go into the history of these evicted tenants, we do not want to inquire too closely how it came about. The Land-Conference made it part of their conditions that the restoration should be done as quickly as possible. Unfortunately restoration is always difficult and takes a long time, but the Act contemplates, as quickly as possible, getting rid of this troublesome thing. The Act does this, no doubt, in spite of the opposition of hon. Members opposite, who fought hard on this one particular point. I urged that it was best not to have this proviso. I thought it was dangerous and unnecessary, though I cannot but acknowledge that there was some force in the argument, taken separately and simply as an ethical maxim. Therefore, although I have some little regard for my reputation as a lawyer, I was not unwilling to accept it, although I was a little anxious as to what interpretation a Court of Law would put on it, and if I had pressed for the point I feel sure it would have been made perfectly plain. The proviso was tagged on as a whole, and was not amended. I accepted it, and it has upset us altogether, and therefore I think the House will agree that there will be no injustice in seeking to rectify that one particular error, and to secure that it means no more than Lord Lansdowne said it did. And now with regard to this general process I want to make a very short statement. I do not think there is any dispute about the figures, although they are not worked out right down to the present day. The number of evicted tenants that had been reinstated under Section 2 of the Act of 1903 down to 31st May, 1907, was 1,033, but the number now is 1,595. Therefore 562 have been reinstated during the last twelve months. Of this number, 429 have been reinstated by landlords and 133 by the Commisioners on land purchased by them. The Commissioners are disposed to think that, on the whole, and having regard to the difficulties of the question, these figures are not unsatisfactory. The Act of last session only came into force on 24th October, so that they have only had six months experience of its working. We are all, in the matter of land purchase and the restoration of evicted tenants, in a great hurry. We all want to see the job done as quickly as the financial arrangements will allow. But it is only fair to remind the House that we cannot, in dealing with a Land Act, proceed with red-hot haste, and we have to submit to a good deal of delay. The first thing you have to do is to find out where there is suitable land for compulsory acquisition. Then you have to find out who is the owner—and this I can assure the House is sometimes a most difficult task—and you have to place yourself in communication with him. You have to give the public notice through the *Gazette* and you have to serve copies of the notice upon all the parties interested. A report has to be obtained and sent in to the Commissioners, who have to meet and consider it. You may then have to give the owner a month to make up his mind about your offer, and if he refuses it then there has to be a time fixed for the hearing of the case, and his objection has to be determined judicially. You have to allow the owner time to appeal. He may claim that the land you want is part of the home farm and you cannot buy it. We cannot, however anxious we may be, comply with the necessary procedure in less than six months. Since October we have used the powers of the Act to acquire land compulsorily for the purpose of the restoration of these evicted tenants in thirty-five cases. In one of these cases, owing to the ultimate readiness of the landlord to accelerate the processes, we have carried it out and, all objections being waived, we have concluded the matter and nine evicted tenants have been reinstated on the land. In the other cases, objections have been lodged, and the time for the consideration of those objections has not yet been reached. With regard to the Clanricarde estate, we were willing to pay the price, and then Lord Clanricarde, being advised that this Act does not bear the interpretation we hoped it would, made his appeal, with the result with which the Committee are acquainted. Though I am as much annoyed at the delay as anybody, I do not think it can be said that, during the six months in which the rules have been in force, the Estates Commissioners have acted otherwise than as quickly as they could. There are difficulties in the way of the Commissioners in this work of the restoration of evicted tenants. Many of these tenants will not take any land except that from which they were formerly evicted. In many cases they cannot get the land from which they were formerly evicted, because it is in the possession of *bona fide* tenants, and the evicted tenants refuse to take other untenanted land which we offer to them. Then, again, sometimes when they are willing to take untenanted land in lieu of their old holdings, the people in the locality do not at all welcome their coming there. It is only fair to bear in mind that evicted tenants are not the universal favourites that we may be led, from debates in this House, sometimes to think is the case. This applies both to land under the Act of 1903 and to land compulsorily taken under the Act of last year. Then the evicted tenants want to remain in their own county. That is a very natural wish, but the difficulty is that, in many of the counties, there is no untenanted land available for them, and therefore the situation becomes one of very great difficulty. These are some of the causes which have led to delay, but, great as is that delay, I do not think that, with the present staff at their disposal, I can honestly hold out any prospect of its being very materially reduced. I am engaged in the most searching inquiry as to where the delay occurs, as to where all this leakage of time is. I confess the delay does startle me. The delay does not occur in the examiners' office or in the distribution of the money, but in the inspection of the estates and the preliminary survey which is carried out with an insufficient staff. It is a delay of two, three, and sometimes four years. There is undoubtedly a considerable leakage somewhere, and the House of Commons is entitled to know where it is. Some people say it is the Treasury, but they are able to reply that with regard to land purchase they have never refused an actual demand for money which has been put properly before them. Whether they have always allowed a sufficient staff is quite another matter. With regard to the housing of the Land Commission, I do not think that that is a really important point.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): Will the right hon. Gentleman say what sort of inquiry he contemplates? Is it by a Departmental Committee?

MR. BIRRELL: No, I have a much better plan than that; I am inquiring myself by a series of examinations and cross-examinations of the people in the place, and of the members of the Land Commission, and I would be very glad to be assisted by any number of persons. But I really do not think that in a matter of that kind, at present at all events, there is much occasion for a public inquiry, because I think I will be able to elicit the facts for myself. I am prepared to receive any assistance I may stand in need of.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): When does the right hon. Gentleman hope to report?

MR. BIRRELL: I shall be perfectly prepared to communicate to the House without unnecessary delay the result of my investigations. The hon. Member for Monaghan spoke of the refusal of the Commissioners to give their grounds of objection. I am bound to say that I do not think it would be possible for the Commissioners to give their grounds of objection. Although the House is most anxious to do justice to the evicted tenant and to see him restored, you should remember that he is not exactly in the position of a litigant. He has thrown himself on the mercy of the House, and perhaps he has not had a full measure of it. We are doing our best to restore a great number of persons who of necessity are exceedingly poor; some are aged, and there is no use putting them upon the land unless they have the strength and energy to employ a free grant properly in the work of the farm. It would not facilitate or accelerate the working of the Act if every person whom the Commissioners refused was entitled to demand a rehearing in consequence of some criticism which he would be sure to offer upon the nature of the grounds on which the Commissioners had acted, and therefore I cannot hold out any assurance on that point. Having regard to the delicacy of their operations, I think the Commissioners must be trusted. I certainly think the delay in the making of free grants is a matter that should be looked into at once. I should have thought that, as soon as an action was decided in favour of the evicted tenant and a farm had been found for him, it would be obviously desirable and convenient to see that he was put into a position to make something of it. It is cold comfort to put a poor person on a barren bit of land unless you supply him with the means of making his living out of it. I have not heard any complaints on that matter, although I have no doubt that they exist. [AN HON. MEMBER: They will be pointed out in a few minutes.] I will promise to make inquiries into the matter. It is obvious that the free grant should accompany the placing of a person on the land.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid) asked whether anything had been done to remove the financial block in the working of the Land Act. The Prime Minister in reply to a deputation in November last promised that in two months a scheme would be submitted to the House. Six months had elapsed and nothing had been done.

MR. BIRRELL: I do not remember the Prime Minister saying so, but the hon. Gentleman is no doubt accurate. I am not in a position at the present moment to lay before the Committee any useful information as to the mode in which we propose to deal with the financial block.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said the right hon. Gentleman had expressed a desire to know what were the causes of the delay which undoubtedly had characterised the proceedings of the various Land Commissions since 1903 up to the present. He could give him some assistance. He would suggest that the right hon. Gentleman should begin in the first place with the Estates Commissioners. All in this House knew that one of the cardinal and essential principles of the settlement which was supposed to be carried into law by the Act of 1903, was that where the tenants' rents were judicial rents, and where the landlord was willing to sell, and the tenants were willing to buy, within what were called the zone figures, there was to be no further investigation as to security. He quite agreed that when the question of the zones came up for decision in Committee during the progress of the Bill of 1903, a strong complaint was made by some hon. Members below the gangway against that provision, but to the credit of those who were responsible for that land settlement that portion was adhered to and found its place in Section 1 of the Act. But from that hour the Estates Commissioners had deliberately set themselves to override that provision, and the result had been that in cases which came within the exact terms of Section 1, and where the sales ought to have gone through without the least delay, months had been wasted in the most frivolous investigations, and questions put by the Estates Commissioners solely for the purpose of getting behind the provisions of the Act and assuming jurisdiction which this House refused to confer on them, namely, the power of inquiring into the security. They did not sin without light and leading, because two or three years ago the question came up in a well-known case which went to the Court of Appeal. That Court declared in express terms that if the cases came within the zones the Estates Commissioners had no right or power to put those queries to the tenants or the landlords where the queries were manifestly only concerned with the question of security. That decision, from that hour to this, had been deliberately disobeyed by the Estates Commissioners.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): At the instance of the Treasury.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said he did not know who was responsible, but the fact could not be contradicted. A few months ago another case was taken to the Court of Appeal, and again the Court told them that they were deliberately violating the law, and that the questions they were putting with the object of beating down the vendor were outside their jurisdiction. He could give the Chief Secretary the names of the estates referred to if he wished to have them. He had been consulted over and over again in regard to estates where the vendors had been tormented for months with queries with regard to the history of the holdings, all of which were outside the jurisdiction of the Commissioners. Therefore, if the right hon. Gentleman wanted to find out the causes of the delay, he would recommend him to begin at the fountain head, and he would find that the action of the Estates Commissioners in the direction referred to was largely responsible. He did not say that if the law were otherwise these investigations might not be very proper, but when Parliament had determined, as the result of a compromise, to give this concession to vendors whose tenants had had fair rents fixed, it was improper and wrong for the Estates Commissioners to attempt to overrule that solemn decision. Again, with reference to the recent decision as regards the powers of the Estates Commissioners in dealing with tenanted land which they proposed to purchase compulsorily for the purpose of restoring evicted tenants, no one reading the language of the Act could entertain the slightest doubt that the Court of Appeal was right. The Chief Secretary had no doubt as to the effect of the Amendment made by the House of Lords in the Evicted Tenants Bill, for he candidly stated that the introduction of these words was a triumph for Lord Clanricarde. There was nothing novel in the procedure of the House of Lords in that respect, because the right hon. Gentleman would recollect that when the Bill was in the House of Commons he himself had an Amendment down on the Paper in precisely the same language, but owing to the fall of the guillotine it was not reached. He would also remind the right hon. Gentleman that he suggested to him, with the view of avoiding argument, that when his Amendment was reached he was inclined to give it some favourable consideration. What was the history of the Amendment? When the Bill of 1903 was going through the House of Commons it was distinctly stated by the hon. and learned Member for Waterford—and he thought also by the hon. Member for East Mayo—that he for one could be no party to ever seeking to apply compulsion to any tenant or so-called planter who was a *bona fide* farmer.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) said that that was not the case where a *bona fide* planter wanted to give up his holding.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said he would come to that. What he was stating now was the history of the introduction of the Amendment, and they must begin at the beginning of a history and not at the end. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford stated distinctly that he would never ask on behalf of his party that compulsion should be applied to disturb planters in their holdings who were *bona fide* cultivating them as farmers. On the strength of that statement he took the liberty of putting down the Amendment which met with the fate to which he had referred, and afterwards the House of Lords' Amendment was introduced. Hon. Gentlemen below the gangway forgot and the right hon. Gentleman overlooked the fact that there were two persons in Ireland as well as in England and Scotland who were interested in a holding—the landlord as well as the tenant. Under the Act of 1881, if a tenant chose to sell his holding—as those planters might do to-morrow—the landlord had the right to serve a notice of pre-emption, and to have the value of that holding determined, and to purchase it himself. The landlord had an interest in retaining a good tenant who had cultivated his farm as a farmer, and in not having that tenant displaced against the will of the landlord, and having forced upon him by the Estates Commissioners a tenant who might have been one of the worst and most impoverished persons in the community—a man who might have been the centre of disorder and disturbance, a man who had actually taken part, as a ringleader, in crime and intimidation in the district. Was it to be said that Parliament last year intended that the *bona fide* good farmer, presumably solvent and who paid his rent, was to be compulsorily got rid of in favour of such a man? There was a fallacy in the argument of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. They overlooked the fact that the landlord had still some interest in his property in Ireland, and that he should be protected from the State coming down in the persons of the Estate Commissioners and saying—"We will turn out the *bona fide* honest, hard-working tenant who was cultivating his land as a farmer in order to reinstate this other man, without your being consulted."

MR. A. ROCHE said that the planter was anxious to go, but the law would not allow him to go.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said that in that respect the law was perfectly just and consistent. He would put the case to the hon. Gentleman who interrupted him, that if he were the fortunate owner of house property in the hands of decent, respectable men paying rent, and if the State came to these men and ordered them to break their contracts with him against his will and without consulting him, so that their places might be taken by men who had subjected him for a number of years to intimidation and annoyance, would he say that the State acted with wisdom and justice? He would further point out that in the case of the farmer to whom he referred, there was no great hardship to the tenant, except that he would not get the extra year's purchase to induce him to go. But on the other hand, he could sell his farm in the open market without the consent of the landlord; but in that case the landlord had the right to step in and say he would buy it. If they deprived the landlord of his rights under the evicted tenant legislation, why should not the landlord say, "I will not allow these tenants to be compulsorily bought out by a bribe from the State without my consent." He maintained that the Chief Secretary must have construed the Lords' Amendment in that sense, otherwise he failed to see how he could have described it as "a triumph for Lord Clanricarde." Not only that, the right hon. Gentleman said on 26th August last that the introduction of the Lords' Amendment "had made compulsory reinstatement impossible." It was, therefore, no use the right hon. Gentleman saying now that the Amendment came upon him as a surprise. The right hon. Gentleman was a distinguished lawyer himself, and had the assistance of the Attorney-General and of the Solicitor-General for Ireland, and was it now to be said that the construction of an Act of Parliament was to depend on the construction of a man who was not a lawyer himself.

MR. BIRRELL: It showed the intention of an honest man.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said he supposed the right hon. Gentleman would not exclude himself from that category. The right hon. Gentleman said that, "the result of the Lords' Amendment is to make the compulsory acquisition of land impossible; and it is a triumph for Lord Clanricarde." He was astonished that the right hon. Gentleman should have stated just now that that Amendment took him by surprise and that he was not aware of it.

MR. BIRRELL stated that if he said that he must have said what was rather foolish, because there had been a good deal of land acquired compulsorily under that Act.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said that he held no brief for Lord Clanricarde.

MR. BIRRELL: I hope not.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said it was not a question of Lord Clanricarde but a question of the law of the land. It would be a very dangerous precedent if they were to begin to tinker or tamper with this question merely because the Act had failed to carry out the wishes of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway in regard to this particular landlord. He knew that before the trouble began in 1885 this Clanricarde estate was undoubtedly regarded and admitted to be a low-rented estate; and the best evidence of that was to be found in the fact that a large percentage of the tenants on it had never ventured to challenge the fairness of their rents in the jurisdiction of the Landed Estates Court.

MR. A. ROCHE said the tenants were in arrears.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL said that that was the first time he had ever heard it suggested that the existence of arrears prevented a tenant's going into the Landed Estates Court. [Cries of "Oh!" from the IRISH Benches.] The hon. Gentleman would correct him if he was wrong, but he believed that in the case of some of the Clanricarde tenants who did come into the Land Commissioners' Court the rents were raised.

The fact was uncontrovertible that prior to 1885 the rents on Lord Clanricarde's estate were of such a character that those who applied to the Land Court to have them revised had their rent raised. In 1885 a demand was made for 20 per cent. reduction is excess of what was being asked of the surrounding landlords. That was refused. Then Lord Clanricarde was selected for this intimidation and low-rent campaign because he was unpopular, and an absentee landlord whose fondness for money had got him into bad odour. That trouble had now been put an end to for twenty years, and these men who had been put into the farms, who came within the category of *bona-fide* farmers and cultivators of the soil, were to be turned off. Whilst these men could sell their lands outside the provisions of the Evicted Tenants Act subject to the landlords' right to buy them, under the Act they could not do so until the Estates Commissioners had come to terms with the landlord. The difficulty in this question was one of money. It seemed to him that if a tenant had to compensate a *bona-fide* farmer, if they were going to deprive the landlord of the tenant and inflict upon him a man who from two points of view was objectionable, it was only reasonable to say that the landlord should be able to put a veto on it. He was not prepared to give support to any attempt to promote vindictive legislation for the purpose of injuring a particular individual who might be obnoxious to hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. No case had been made out for the purpose of remedying a suggested error in drafting, in language which was as clear as daylight, and the construction of which was actually present to the mind of the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) thanked the Chief Secretary for the course he had announced his intention of taking in this matter. He did not think he could do better than introduce a one-clause Bill in accordance with the disclosed intention of the Leader of the Opposition in the House of Lords. The right hon. Gentleman who had just addressed the House and who, when not in his war-paint, was a most kind-hearted man, had just given the Committee a specimen of the old tone which used to be adopted before the Act of 1903 was passed when speaking of the evicted tenants. What was the language of the right hon. Gentleman? It was no longer a question of protecting the planters, it was to keep out those wicked criminal agitators and disturbers, the evicted tenants, who might be a centre of disturbance and crime. He thought all that kind of thing had been abandoned, and that after the Act of 1903 there was to be a clean slate, and that all these bitter memories were to be wiped out. It seemed to him like the case of Rip Van Winkle that a man should come forward now when both Houses of Parliament had committed themselves to a policy of restoring those evicted tenants and say that these men, because they were agitators and disturbers, ought not to be restored to their homes. Of course, the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly right in saying that the Judges in Ireland were bound by the statute apart from the intention of those who introduced the Act, but the right hon. Gentleman went further and wanted to thrust down their throats that this Amendment or proviso was introduced in the House of Lords for the purpose, not of protecting the planters, but of protecting Lord Clanricarde. He maintained that that was the very purpose which the Lords themselves repudiated.

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL: Why then was it described as a triumph for Lord Clanricarde?

MR. DILLON said that was what the right hon. Gentleman said he feared. Could the right hon. Gentleman quote a single noble Lord who said that that Amendment was brought forward to protect Lord Clanricarde? Not one; they distinctly repudiated that, and said they were doing it to protect the planters. He thought the Chief Secretary was very wise in giving the House of Lords an opportunity now of showing their sympathy in this matter, and he would be very much surprised if they did not support this Bill, which would enable those new tenants who were genuinely anxious to go to accept the terms offered them. What was the situation at present on the Clanricarde estate? He put on one side for the moment the question of possible disturbance and bitterness. The right hon. Gentleman said that for some years past the trouble upon the Clanricarde estate had been settled. Was that all the right hon. Gentleman knew about rural Ireland? Anyone responsible for the government of Ireland must have been surprised at those words. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of a settlement. A settlement, when in Portumna and Woodford there were 150 families living three years out of their homes. Was that the kind of settlement which the right hon. Gentleman, even from the political point of view, could view with satisfaction? But putting that aside altogether, what was the condition of things in that part of the country? Let the Committee look at it from the economic point of view. There planters were not cultivating their land, they had been anxious to get away, and they had put in no crop owing to this unfortunate mistake made by the House of Lords in inserting an Amendment which he did not believe they intended to have the effect it had had. This state of affairs prevailed owing to the interpretation of the Court of Appeal in Ireland—and the Court of Appeal in Ireland had a most sinister record in regard to land. They had destroyed one Act after another, and this House had been asked time after time to undo the work of the Court of Appeal in Ireland upon this very question of land. Many of those planters were brought there on false pretences from far-away parts of the country and without any knowledge of the conditions into which they were to be introduced. They were placed upon the land having sold their own homes in the North, and he was told that they were by no means thankful to Lord Clanicarde. They had put no crop in, and the land was lying waste and derelict. They had this extraordinary state of things. The evicted tenants had no land and were anxious to get back to their homes. The planters wanted to get away, and for this purpose a special Act of Parliament was passed, but Lord Clanricarde said "No, these men must be kept there, the intentions of Parliament must be defeated." He had a telegram sent to him that day from Portumna, saying that one of these planters was decreed at Gort for £170, and had abandoned his holdings; two others, Holmes and Johnston left previously. Elliott was decreed in January for over £200. Several of the planters had put in no crop, yet these were the kind of tenants the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University pleaded for. That was the interpretation of the law, he would not say a false interpretation, but it was most distinctly against the expressed intention of both Houses. Could any reasonable Member say that this condition of things ought to be allowed to continue? He confessed he was amazed and disappointed to hear the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Dublin University say that in his opinion nothing ought to be done. That was the whole substance of his speech: the right hon. Gentleman would leave this wretched district to stew in its own juice, breeding crime, misery, and misfortune, and actually reducing a whole tract of country to a condition of uncultivated nature. He thought it would be universally admitted that this condition of things could not be allowed to continue, and he most heartily congratulated the Chief Secretary on the promise he had made that without delay he would introduce a one-clause Bill in the House of Lords, and give them the opportunity, which he confidently believed they would take, of carrying out their avowed intentions of last year. If the Bill passed the the House of Lords there would be no difficulty in passing it in the House of Commons, and the horrible Clanricarde struggle would be brought to a conclusion. In regard to the general condition of the evicted tenants of Ireland, he, for one, most heartily appreciated the great difficulty of the task, and he and all his colleagues were grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for having passed the Evicted Tenants Bill last year, and for the exertions which they knew he had made to expedite that work. He was sure the right hon. Gentleman would admit that these unhappy people, many of them twenty or twenty-five years out of their homes, who had again and again during the last ten years been promised reinstatement by successive Governments, and who had had three separate measures passed through the House, would be embittered by this disappointment year after year, and by their still being left wandering about, leading the wretched, demoralising, miserable lives that most of them had to lead. No wonder they were impatient, and he was sure that the right hon. Gentleman would do everything in his power to carry out this work. They could not understand what was the cause of the delay, and those who were connected with the national organisation in Ireland were in receipt of extraordinary statements as to what were thought to be the causes. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman as to the difficulties about the disposition of these tenants who required untenanted land. He knew the greed for land in Ireland was tremendous, but the people of Ireland were essentially a peasant people: they loved the land, and like all people who love the land they loved it sometimes to excess. It was a source of trouble which they fully understood. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman, to use an American expression, would as much as possible "speed up" the Commissioners on this particular question of the evicted tenants. Criticism had been passed more than once on the progress made under the new Evicted Tenants Act, and it had been pointed out that only nine evicted tenants had compulsorily been reinstated in the last six months, out of thirty-five cases proceeded with. But according to his information it would be a most mistaken impression to get abroad that this was the full effect of the compulsory measure. He was informed that in a vast number of cases, before the passing of the Act, many landlords had absolutely refused to allow the evicted tenant to be reinstated, but now that they knew a compulsory clause could be enforced against them they came forward and gave voluntarily in order to avoid what might be taken compulsorily. When a man knew that compulsion was in reserve, he naturally preferred to come forward and act of his own free will. It would be very unfair, after the exertions of the right hon. Gentleman in passing the compulsory Act, to allow the House to gather the impression that this was the whole result. He believed a large proportion of the 500 tenants reinstated since last session had been restored in consequence of the passing of the compulsory measure. He would merely, in passing away from that point, call the special attention of the right hon. Gentleman to the fact that on Lord Lansdowne's estate there were still fifteen or twenty campaign evicted tenants to reinstate.

MR. BIRRELL was understood to say that he thought the arrangements for purchase on Lord Lansdowne's estate had now been completed. He did not know how far that covered these cases.

MR. DILLON said the right hon. Gentleman was now speaking of the Kerry estate. He was himself speaking of the Queen's County estate. On the Kerry estate of Lord Lansdowne there were no campaign evictions. On the Masserene estate, also, there were three or four cases unprovided for, although the vast bulk of the tenants had been reinstated. He believed that the right hon. Gentleman, from his sympathetic spirit, would do all that was possible in these matters. He wanted to say a word or two on the question of the delay in the general working of the Land Commission. The right hon. Gentleman had given another promise to which he attached the greatest possible value. He thought that it was of the utmost importance that they should know where they stood as to the causes of these delays. There had been in Ireland the greatest misconception as to these causes. Some people there believed that it was the Treasury holding back the money, but the Treasury said they had never refused money. He did not profess to know himself, but these were the statements floating about in Ireland. Another statement in Ireland was that the Commissioners, to use a trade union expression, were, at a hint from the Treasury, doing what was termed "ca' canny." He did not know himself whether that was so. Others said that it was due to an insufficient staff. He believed that the delay was largely due to that cause. Then there was the idea that, after all, it was only human nature that the staff of the Commission, having only a temporary job, were not in a violent hurry to conclude it. He was afraid there was some possibility that if a man had £800 a year, and knew that it would end with the job, with no sort of compensation or pension, he would want rather a "driving boss" to keep him working hard. He did not say that in any spirit of offence against the staff; it might be entirely unjust. He rejoiced to learn that the right hon. Gentleman was conducting an investigation, in a manner which he had no doubt was most effective, to find out the real cause of the delay. Some people said it was due to the delay caused by the investigation and inspection of estates. If that were true, and the staff was insufficient, then it ought to be increased. The staff of inspection could be most easily increased, because there was a very large supply of people in the country quite competent to inspect estates. They had heard a statement from the right hon. Member for Dublin University, a statement which he had never heard before, that the delay was largely due to the perversity of the Estates Commissioners, who had endeavoured to get behind the law and to abrogate the zones. The best way to meet that was to do away with the zones and save the time of the Commissioners. The statement of the right hon. Gentleman was very one-sided. "Why have all these difficult investigations?" the right hon. Gentleman asked. Had he never heard of a case of attempted fraud? He had heard of a great many in which there had been attempted frauds of the grossest character in connection with the system of zones.

Mr. JAMES CAMPBELL: In the case to which I referred there was not a suggestion of fraud.

Mr. DILLON said he did not say there was. But did not the right hon. Gentleman see how absurd his argument was? If any number of fraudulent transactions had been discovered, of course that put the Commissioners on their guard and forced them to investigate. One of the most amazing transactions he ever heard of was that in which a man, by the operation of the zones, endeavoured to get a price far in excess of the value of the land, and there had been transactions where the relations between the landlords and the tenants were of a fraudulent character, the tenant signing for a price far in excess of what he could afford to pay, on condition that the landlord handed a considerable sum back to him. There had been hundreds of cases in Ireland where the landlord and tenant, by a collusive arrangement, had signed agreements for second term rents which were never fixed by the Court at all, and the landlord would hand back part of the price. The system of zones had again and again led to these doubtful transactions, and that was one reason, no doubt, why the Commissioners were compelled to adopt a suspicious and inquiring attitude in some of the cases to which the right hon. Gentleman alluded. When this question of the efficiency of the zones in doing away with delay was raised in 1903, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover said the delays did not occur through the necessity for inspection, because the estates had to be inspected in any case, but they occurred in the investigation of title. He did not believe the cause, which was new to him, put forward by the right hon. and learned Gentleman was a substantial cause of delay, and he rejoiced that the Chief Secretary, when they came to discuss the Land Bill later in the session, would be able to give them an authoritative statement of the causes of delay in the Land Commission, so that they might be in a position to know what they ought to demand and to press for. There could be no doubt that the state of affairs was exceedingly serious. They had the agreements signed, and according to the information he had received it would take nearly seven years to deal with those agreements, which were now lying in the office, so that if there was not another agreement signed it would be seven years before the present accumulation was cleared off. That condition of things could not be allowed to continue. It was impossible. Public opinion in Ireland would rise up against it. One of the most urgent things to be found out was what were the real causes of the delay, and when they were ascertained all sections of Irish representatives would join in a resolute effort to remove them.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I do not desire to detain the Committee more than two or three minutes, but I think it would be desirable I should say a word before the Attorney-General replies. With regard to the general case more largely dwelt upon by the hon. Member for East Mayo, I think it will be found that whatever dispute there may be as to the cause of the delay there is a general consensus of opinion that it is deplorable in the interests of all concerned, and that it is altogether unexpected in its extent. The House ought certainly to be in possession of all information available in order that we may do our best to find some way out of what is at the moment a most unsatisfactory situation. There is no doubt, if the latest report we have at our disposal is well founded, a considerable number of years, even larger than the hon. Member for Mayo has suggested, must elapse before you can get any completion of the present transactions, which, so far as the parties are concerned, are practically settled, all that is wanted being the final approval of the Estates Commissioners and the paying over of the money. The Government will find a general agreement on all sides of the House to support any measure calculated to bring these transactions to a conclusion. I want to say one word about a case which arose earlier in the debate with regard to the Clanricarde estate. The Chief Secretary quoted some words used by the Leader of the other House, and suggested that the operation of this Act so far as the Law Courts in Ireland are concerned, had not been what was anticipated by my noble friend in the House of Lords. I should not like to commit myself—I am not a lawyer, and therefore I do not know whether the Law Courts were justified from a lawyer's point of view in the decision at which they arrived; but whatever lawyers may think, we are bound to accept the decisions of the Bench, and the decision in this case was that this tenant, however willing to sell, was not to be bought out. The facts presented by the Chief Secretary do not give a complete statement of the case which must be considered before we make up our minds. The Chief Secretary told the Committee that this particular tenant was most anxious to go, and that his land would be available. What the Committee do not possibly realise except those who are Irish Members—and I speak of it with bated breath myself, because there is nothing more difficult to understand—are the technicalities of the various Irish Land Acts. They are a labyrinth in which anyone might easily lose himself, and the Chief Secretary and the Attorney-General will agree that under the Act of 1881 if a tenant wishes to sell his tenant right—in other words, to get out—he has the power to do so, but his landlord has the right of pre-emption. The actual power is given to the tenant under the Act of 1881. Before we accept the statements laid down to-day as being a just cause for further legislation, the House ought to know by what process the sitting tenant is to be persuaded to give up his holding. If the State provide a certain sum of money to enable the evicted tenants to be restored to their holdings, and the money is used to bribe the sitting tenant to quit—using the word in no offensive sense—by offering him special terms in order to get him out, it is not quite fair to the tenant who is anxious but unable to go because of the interpretation placed upon the Act by Courts of Law. It is quite obvious that he has power to go under the Act of 1881 and get the market value of his property, but the landlord has the right of pre-emption which would in this case prevent the land being made available for the restoration of evicted tenants. Everybody will realise that whatever view may be taken of Irish landlords, good or bad, what Parliament decided is that money shall be available to buy out the landlord and to replace him by the tenant. But Parliament has never suggested that you are to bribe the sitting tenant to go in order to put into his place a man whom the landlord considers to be a bad tenant and who will farm the land at a disadvantage. I am not suggesting that the tenant would in this case be bad, but we must not be assumed as far as this side of the House is concerned to have committed ourselves to the general conclusion at which we might appear to have arrived without knowing more of the facts of the case and the way in which the sitting tenant is to be persuaded to sell his holding. It must be remembered that this safeguard which was inserted in the House of Lords was only made to cover the case of a *bona fide* tenant cultivating his land in a proper manner, and therefore it does not apply to any of these cases of which so much was made in the debates on the Evicted Tenants Bill where a man is not a *bona fide* tenant or where he is not carrying out his business as a farmer in a proper agricultural manner. Therefore it narrows itself down to this very small principle, whether a man is a good farmer, doing his business in the best way he can, according to his intelligence and his industry, and only anxious to go because, as I understand it, he is offered terms so favourable that they overcome his reluctance. The Chier Secretary indicated that these men were so uncomfortable and so dissatisfied with their lot that they were anxious to go. But the Act of 1881 provides legitimate means by which they can go if their condition is as described. I very much question whether Parliament, when it was debating these details of the Evicted Tenants Act, meant that, while there was machinery provided under the Act of 1881 which enables the tenant to go if he wishes, you should use this Act to bribe a man to go, and offer him special terms to clear out against the will of the landlord, and give opportunities of purchase under the Act of 1903 to a tenant, who in the opinion of those who have experience of the property, is not likely to be a good or satisfactory tenant. Therefore I think we must reserve our decision on these points until we have a little fuller information. I am glad to gather that there is to be a fuller statement later on in the session, and that being so it is obviously more convenient that we should not go into the whole financial discussion now. I think it is only right to enter this *caveat* against what otherwise might appear to be a general acceptance of conditions which will require a little more investigation.

*MR. CHERRY said he wished to refer to the charge made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University against the Estates Commissioners. He had, with all the responsibility of his position as a former Attorney-General for Ireland, accused these officials who were appointed by his own Government of having deliberately disregarded the law laid down by the Court of Appeal. The Estates Commissioners were entitled to be defended against that charge. With full knowledge of their proceedings, which he had followed from the day the Land Act was passed, he said the charge was entirely unworthy. He did not believe there was the slightest foundation for it; it was one of the most unfounded charges that had ever been made. He knew to what the right hon. Gentleman referred. It was laid down by the Court of Appeal some years ago that in cases within the zones the Land Commission was bound to consider the security as adequate and was not entitled to make inquiry into individual cases. That was quite true as regarded particular holdings which had been sold, but the Estates Commissioners decided that before they proceeded to consider the question of individual holdings at all, they were entitled, in considering whether or not they would declare the land to be sold an estate, to investigate its security, for the purpose of seeing whether they, in the interests of the Treasury, should sanction the sale of the estate at all. The right hon. Gentleman said that that was a deliberate disregard of the decision of the Appeal Court. But if it was it was affirmed by the present Master of the Rolls. Mr. Justice Meredith decided that the action of the Commissioners in making that investigation before sanctioning the sale of an estate was a part of their duty. It was not until quite recently that the matter was brought before the Court of Appeal, which overruled the decision of Mr. Justice Meredith, and pending the overruling of the decision it was acted on by the Estates Commissioners and by Mr. Justice Wylie, the present Judge of the Land Commission Court. He did not think any charge had been made against the two Judges who had taken the view he mentioned, and he did not think any charge could be or ought to be made against the Estates Commissioners either. The Estates Commissioners in discharging most difficult and responsible duties were entitled to the same protection as the Judges, and their conduct ought not to be attacked by hon. Members in the House. The right hon. Member for South Dublin had adopted a kindly tone on the evicted tenants question, and he believed he would agree with him in thinking that if that question was to be finally settled the Clanricarde estate must be settled, for it was the one serious spot, the one open sore. It was obvious, having regard to the decision of Mr. Justice Wylie, who agreed with the Commissioners that the matter was neither so clear nor so simple as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Trinity College appeared to suppose. They proposed to ask the House of Lords to pass a short Act on lines which agreed with what was undoubtedly the opinion of Lord Lansdowne, and he trusted it would receive the treatment which was desired. It was argued from the opposite side that it would be an unfair thing to compel landlords to put out good solvent tenants and have them replaced by tenants who were not equally solvent and acceptable, but if this Act was put into operation that case would not arise, because tenancy would cease. It would be for the purpose of acquiring that land out and out, in which case Lord Clanricarde would in that respect disappear. He would incur no risk, because he would not be brought in contact one way or another with the new purchasers. It would not be a case of hardship for him more than for any other landlord who had sold his property to allow evicted tenants to be reinstated. It had been asked from what fund the money would come. He replied from the Reserve Fund which was intended by the Act of 1903, and so far as he was concerned he thought it could not be better spent in the interests of peace and good will to Ireland than in settling the Clanricarde estate.

*MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.) hoped that in this matter the Tory Party would not tie themselves to the skirts of Lord Clanricarde. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had quoted the expression used in the House of Lords upon this question, but he would like to appeal to the general body of the Tory Party in this sense. He thought they were making a great mistake in making these Irish questions a battle horse, and they were being forced into it by a very small section of their leaders. They all remembered just before the late Government left office the differences between Lord Londonderry and Mr. Chamberlain upon the fiscal question. Lord Londonderry took up the free trade line and Mr. Chamberlain adopted the protective line. Consequently there was a section of the Tory Party who wanted to keep this Irish difficulty in the front in order to submerge the fiscal question, whereas the general body of the Tory Party desired to put the fiscal question forward in order that the Irish question might be forgotten at the Dissolution. Unfortunately, it happened that in this House there was a very strong section of Irish politicians returned on the Tory side who wished to keep the agrarian sore open for political purposes, but there were many Irish Peers who wanted the Irish land question settled, and he ventured to make an appeal to the Irish peers in the House of Lords led by Lord Lansdowne not to take up on this question the line adopted by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Trinity College. He wished to point out to the House that Trinity College itself had something to lose upon this question. If the Irish land purchase question remained unsettled what would happen? He had turned up the 39th section of the Act of 1903, and he found that under that Act Trinity College was getting a grant of £5,000 per annum, and had been receiving it year after year. Where did that grant come from? Why, out of a fund that would soon be bankrupt unless this purchase difficulty was settled, viz., the Irish Development Grant. So that after all Trinity College had a stake in this matter. He had not for many years been in the West of Ireland or taken part in the Western campaign, with which many of his hon. friends were more intimately concerned, but he did say that deep down in the heart of every Irish Member there was a determination that these Clanricarde tenants should not be deserted. On this point he wished to express his feeling of gratitude to the Chief Secretary, because the moment this question was mentioned, with gallantry and chivalry he at once came forward and said that this subject was part of the bargain, and that he intended to bring in a Bill in another place to settle it. That was business, and it was good business for the Irish landlords. There was not a day passed without some Irish landlord, and even some of the Irish peers, coming and making appeals to them to do something to settle this great financial block, which was a curse to both landlords and tenants. What was happening? At present the tenants were paying a quarter or a half per cent. in interest above the statutory compact and the landlords were also being kept out of their money. He knew instances where landlords were not receiving anything like the equivalent of their old rents, in the shape of interest. Take for example the case of a small landowner. Perhaps the old rental was about £300 a year and the landlord was not getting paid by the State and probably only in interest from the tenants about £200 a year. Was that a state of things which they could allow to continue with equanimity? What was the position of the tenant? Instead of paying twenty years purchase this delay would cause them to have to pay probably twenty-seven or twenty-eight years purchase for their holdings. What would the Member for Trinity College gain by keeping up this miserable business on the Clanricarde estate? Would he even get the thanks of Lord Clanricarde? No, he would not even get a halfpenny postcard. Would he get the thanks of the other Irish landlords? He ventured to say that with the exception of Lord Londonderry, who wanted the fight to turn upon Ireland, all the statesmanlike minds of the Tory Party in the House of Lords would pass the Bill he had referred to without any difficulty. It was not now their desire to make Ireland the battle horse. At the recent election the Member for North-West Manchester came forward and in the very beginning of his campaign he stated how Ireland was weltering in bloodshed and disorder. When the right hon. Gentleman went to assist him at the election was that the line he took?

MR. JAMES CAMPBELL: Yes.

*MR. T. M. HEALY: Were those the lines taken when members of the Tory Party went down to Wolverhampton, Dundee, Stirling Burghs, and whereever Irishmen were? On those occasions did they shout with a wild hurrah for Lord Clanricarde and down with the evicted tenants? All this was bad business for the Tory Party, although it was so small a question and only affected 120 men who had been for twenty-five years looking forward with some hope to this Parliament to fulfil the promise it had made again and again. As to the cause for delay in land purchase, he believed it was quite true to say that no doubt the Treasury had never refused any definite sum of money whenever it was wanted. Yes, but they always took care by the manner in which they managed the staff that the Estates Commissioners should never be able to demand more than a definite sum of money, and he viewed with great suspicion the sending of this new Treasury Remembrancer to Dublin. What had happened? It had gone beyond a joke. The Estates Commissioners wrote to England and said they wanted more staff. There was a traitor to the Estates Commissioners in the office. He would not mention his name. Some hon. Members could guess it. That official saw this letter going over, and the Treasury here in London sent back to him for his private counsel the letter of the Estates Commissioners demanding more staff. And from the office in Dublin the Treasury were supplied with such answers as could be put forward to the demand of the Estates Commissioners, and actually it was out of the Estates Commissioners' office that the Treasury got the materials by which to reply to their own demand. The new Remembrancer would render that all unnecessary. Wherever he had been dug up from he was a new man, and had never been in Ireland before. He had been sent over to Ireland with a view to preventing, if he could, any increase in the staff; to prevent any increase, of course, in the demands upon the Treasury. He had been sent to put a brake on this question of land purchase. That was the whole matter. The Irish landlords were taking the situation very meekly, and he thought the right hon. Member for Dublin University and the right hon. Member for South Dublin and their friends in the House of Lords would be much better advised from the point of view of their own party, from the point of view of those Imperial interests and that Imperial flag which they were constantly flaunting under their noses, if they asked the present Government "When is British faith to be kept both with Irish landlords and Irish tenants?" The British Government pledged themselves, whether they liked it or not, five years ago, that they would settle the land question or would find money for doing it. They had taken upon themselves the settlement of this question, of buying out all the English garrison, yet these men were not likely to handle the coin for the next five, six, or seven years. If, in the recent South African war, £1,000 worth of goods had been taken from a shopkeeper for the British troops, and if a British officer had pledged the British nation to pay the amount as soon as the war was over, what would the shopkeeper have thought of British faith if he had been kept waiting five, six, or seven years for payment? That was the position of the Irish land question. Was that British faith? Was it upon such a system as that that British honour and commerce had been maintained? Would the Tory Party find it more to their interest to quarrel over the restoration of 120 evicted tenants—to keep them in hot water cost some £4,000 or £5,000 a year—than to effect a settlement of a great question? He appealed to the Conservative Members who had the interests of peace and order at heart to allow this very small matter on the Clanricarde estate to be settled by the right hon. Gentleman, and he could tell Irish Peers his own belief was that they would thereby aid in effecting a larger settlement. If they did not they could hardly expect from the Irish representatives that co-operation which was so desirable in order to bring the whole purchase question to a satisfactory and speedy determination.

*MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) on behalf of the Irish Party congratulated the Chief Secretary on the prompt action he proposed to take in connection with the Clanricarde question. Very few men could be found in this country to defend the tyrannical, rapacious, and unjust conduct of Lord Clanricarde. About a week ago there appeared in the Irish newspapers extracts from Returns issued by the Estates Commissioners, but these Returns were not yet available for Members of this House. On applying at the Vote Office a few days ago for the Returns he was informed that one copy in "dummy" had been placed in the library. It was very inconvenient that the Irish Members who were interested in matters of this kind should not be put in possession of information immediately the Dublin newspapers were furnished with it. The same cause of complaint occurred frequently in regard to other Departments, and he hoped something would be done to facilitate the circulation of information required by the Irish Members in relation to matters which came up for discussion. As to the Chief Secretary's request for information regarding the delay in the procedure of the Estates Commissioners he would refer the right hon. Gentleman to what was done in regard to inspectors. Since the Act of 1903 was passed one very great defect in the administration arose from the frequent removal of inspectors from districts with whose circumstances they had become acquainted. The circumstances were often of a complicated nature and it took an inspector a considerable time to inform himself. In the county of Cork, where there were many evicted tenants, he knew a district where there had been four or five inspectors, one after another, and each had to get to understand the merits of the cases and to ascertain whether the tenants were *bona fide* persons or impostors who did not deserve any consideration whatever. These changes of inspectors meant interminable delay. The latest arrival was utterly ignorant of the circumstances in the district, and the whole process of collecting information had to be gone over *de novo.* It meant a vast amount of personal inconvenience and drudgery to the Irish Members connected with the constituencies where the evicted estates were situated. He knew one estate where the first inspector communicated with him and he gave him all the help in his power in acquainting him with the circumstances. That inspector also got into communication with the tenants and priests in the locality, and no sooner had he come to understand the case and reported upon it to the Estates Commissioners, than he was succeeded by another inspector. At present the fifth inspector was going over the ground. Besides involving delay in bringing matters to a definite issue, the system of changing the inspectors so frequently was wasteful. The work of reinstatement was very slow. The Act of 1903 had now been five years in operation and up to December last only 1,036 tenants had been reinstated. That was a very deplorable and disappointing state of things. He was glad to hear from the Chief Secretary that the number reinstated up to date was 1,595. He made this complaint in regard to the Estate Commissioners in no spirit of hostility, but only as a matter of criticism.

They all recognised the very difficult and complicated work that they had to discharge. The difficulty was much greater than the first Commissioners encountered under the Act of 1881. But, notwithstanding all that, regrettable delay had occurred, and there had not been that expedition which was expected from them. The question of untenanted land was not altogether confined to the West of Ireland, although it was most acute in those districts where cattle-driving operations had been carried on. It was unquestionably a matter of urgency in the counties of Roscommon, Meath, and Galway, where the people felt it intensely. He cared not how long or short he held a seat in this House, but he was forced by the traditions of the Irish land reformers and of those who had engaged themselves for years in the work of social reform, not to denounce these men who took part in cattle-drives. They might be mistaken in their methods at present, but the evil was a crying evil. The question of untenanted land was, however, not exclusively confined to the West of Ireland. The Chief Secretary was wrong in saying that outside that area it was difficult to find untenanted land. There was too much of it, he was sorry to say, in his own county of Cork. There were there large tracks of good land from which the tenants were driven before 1874 or 1880, but who did not come within the operations of the Act of 1903. The land was lying idle or was largely taken on the eleven months system by farmers who had plenty of land already. The Land Commissioners were very dilatory—he would not say negligent—in their dealing with that land. In his own constituency he knew of four or five places where there were tracks of untenanted land of from 500 to 800 acres, and one of at least 2,000 acres. On the other hand there were plenty of good tenants who were striving to get land on account of their old holdings being now occupied. On the Leader estate there were 2,000 acres untenanted. The landlord sold that untenanted land—at least, the agreement to sell was signed in June, 1905—but the excuse which the landlord gave for not giving it up to the Estate Commissioners was that he had not yet received a penny of the purchase money. The difficulty there lay with the Estate Commissioners who failed in their duty in regard to it. It was time that these Commissioners wakened up to a sense of their duty. There was another case where there was 1,080 acres of untenanted land. The vendor proposed to sell that land to the Estate Commissioners, but to repurchase 880 acres of it for his own use and benefit. His point was that the Commissioners should not have considered the absurdity of recommending an application of that kind, or of entertaining it for one moment. But they would have taken action had it not been for a series of indignation meetings which were held in the neighbourhood. Then there was the estate of Doneraile. After two years of continual pressure, they had got the Commissioners to recognise that there were on that estate 500 or 600 acres of untenanted land quite available for a dozen evicted tenants in the locality, who could not get holdings elsewhere. There was another class of tenants who were reluctant to approach landlords who held their land in their own hands. After the Amendment introduced in last year's Bill by the House of Lords the tenants felt that it was a waste of time to approach the landlords who held the evicted holdings in their own hands. The Estate Commissioners had shown the greatest reluctance in inducing those landlords to reinstate the tenants or to make an estate of the land with which the Commissioners could deal. Hon. Members on the Irish benches had done an incredible amount of work in their endeavour to help the restoration of the evicted tenants to their holdings. The Estate Commissioners had no reason to complain of the many questions which Members put in regard to these cases. They were entirely owing to their anxiety to settle this vexed question, and he assured the Chief Secretary that the Irish Members would co-operate with him in every way in his efforts for the evicted tenants.

MR. GORDON (Londonderry, S.) wished to impress on hon. Members below the gangway that too much of the time and attention of the Estates Commissioners ought not to be given to the minor question of the evicted tenants. There were far greater and more important questions to be dealt with in the carrying out of the Land Purchase Act of 1903; for instance, in cases where the landlord and tenant had agreed to come to terms. It was all very well to talk about the reinstatement of the evicted tenants, but it was a little too much to expect that the whole time and attention of the Estate Commissioners should be given to that matter. He did not want to say much about the restoration of the evicted tenants. He and his colleagues were satisfied that the Bill should be passed, and it was passed, and he hoped the Act would work well. The Chief Secretary had said that over 1,500 tenants had been restored. That showed that the Act was working wonderfully well. Reference had been made by the Chief Secretary to the restoration of the evicted tenants. It must be remembered that in this matter they were buying out a spot of land in the centre of an estate. Provision was made in the Act giving the landlord power to object to the sale of land in the centre of his property for the tenant to set up a farm. Would it not therefore be desirable that when such a case occurred there should be some means by which a large area should be fixed upon and taken by the tenant. This was a question that could be considered when the Chief Secretary brought in the Bill he had promised. In reference to the delay in the work of reinstating tenants, all the causes suggested should be carefully considered with a view to eliminating them as far as possible. He could not understand why the Estates Commissioners should set up for themselves anything that caused unnecessary delay. He did not say they did it purposely, or that they did it without good reason, but at the same time what they did often resulted in delay. The best course such a tribunal could adopt was to take the law as they found it, whether it was good or bad, and administer it as well as they could. It was not possible to say off-hand what should be done, but it was a matter that demanded most serious and anxious consideration. He would earnestly ask the Chief Secretary to see whether he could provide the money necessary to work the Act properly. He was perfectly satisfied that the right hon. Gentleman of all others would be most delighted to find a means to enable the Act to be carried out successfully. If he did this he would earn the thanks, not merely of the Nationalists, but those who represented Unionist constituencies, for upon this one question of the land there was no disagreement between the two parties representing both the tenants and the landlords. The Nationalist Members were wrong in suggesting that the representatives of the landlords wished to stand in the way of a settlement of this question.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.) said the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down had said that the demand of the tenants for reinstatement was almost outrageous. The hon. and learned Member, who followed the passage of the Land Act through this House in 1903 very closely, must remember perfectly well that when he and his friends were anxious to obtain this £112,000,000 for the landlords the passage of that Act would have been resisted by the whole of the Nationalist Members but for the distinct pledge given by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dover, then Chief Secretary, that the evicted tenants would be restored to their holdings, or to holdings found for them, as soon as possible. Directly hon. Members above the gangway got their Act they seemed to forget all their pledges. Two matters that had occurred that evening had given great satisfaction to the Nationalist Party. The first was the assurance given by the Chief Secretary with regard to all those important matters raised by the hon. Member for East Galway, and the second was his promise to deal with them immediately. Another matter of great importance was the statement by the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the number of evicted tenants who had been reinstated in the last six months. The right hon. Gentleman said that of those restored 500 had been restored with the consent and approval of the landlords. He could not say the same with regard to the landlords in his part of the country. But he would appeal to the Chief Secretary upon this question of voluntary agreement, that where the landlords would not consent to the reinstatement of the tenants he would take immediate and drastic steps to compel them. There was a large and extensive landlord in his own constituency who would not sell to his tenant. He had one solitary evicted tenant. The Estates Commissioners came down to him and offered him a price for the holding, which he refused. They then offered a price which was in excess of what was offered for the land adjoining the holding. What did the landlord do? He got his own agent to value the farm. That agent put a considerably higher value upon it than the Estates Commissioners offered, and then the landlord asked the evicted tenant, a widow, if she would consent to pay this excessive price, £200 more than the Commissioners offered, and said that if she would he would give her the difference between that price and the price offered by the Estates Commissioners. If she had accepted that he would have got an excessive price and set a precedent, so far as the sale of the holdings on his estates were concerned, which would result in his obtaining £20,000 in excess of what he should receive for his land. That was a fraud on the Estate Commissioners, and in cases of that kind he thought the Estate Commissioners should take immediate steps to obtain compulsory powers. He did not condemn cattle-driving, though hon. Gentlemen above the gangway would be delighted to see it all over the country, and he thought it was hard upon those who, like himself, had been trying to make these bargains and get the evicted tenants reinstated, to find themselves impeded in this way and to find hon. Gentlemen above the gangway, in such speeches as that delivered this evening by the right hon. Member representing the Dublin University, trying to lead them on. He believed the Chief Secretary was absolutely sincere and anxious to see peace and prosperity restored to the country. He believed that carrying on in a determined manner the policy of restoring the evicted tenants to their holdings, would be like taking the bread and butter of hon. Gentlemen above the gangway, who desired to see a continuance of disorder.

*MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.), said that he came from a part of Ireland where they knew little about the evicted tenants; at the same time, as he had said before in that House, he had a certain amount of sympathy with them. They were largely the victims of the Irish Land League, which showed no sort of responsibility towards them in the long course of years which had succeeded the Plan of Campaign. Under the Act of last year some of the tenants had been restored, and he hoped that a good many more would be restored in the next few months. Since the Bill was passed last year by far the greater number of evicted tenants had been restored to their holdings, or to other holdings, under the Land Act of 1903. He might also remind the House that the total number of evicted tenants at the time of the passing of the Act of 1903 was supposed to be 800, but since that the number had shown a marvellous facility of growth, and last year they had tenants coming from all quarters to qualify as evicted tenants, and ready to take the good things which a bounteous Government was prepared to give them. His interest was more largely enlisted on behalf of the tenants who paid their rents and fulfilled all their honourable obligations, who availed themselves of the Land Act of 1903, who industriously cultivated their land, and who, many of them, found that in the course of three or four years the Government had been unable to settle for the estate and invest them as tenant proprietors. There were at the present moment between 90,000 and 100,000 tenant farmers anxiously inquiring the reason of the delay in settling the farms which they had purchased under the Land Act of 1903. Explanations were offered by both sides of the House as to the cause of the delay, but he agreed in part with the hon. Member for East Mayo that there were several different explanations. He did not think that the fact had been sufficiently brought before the House that last year the House consented to an increased staff for the Land Commission Department amounting in round figures to £20,000, while in the Estimate before the Committee they were asked to increase it by a further £10,000. He respectfully suggested that £30,000 per annum should enable the Government to employ a very substantial additional staff to facilitate the work of this important Department. Whatever was the explanation he was bound to remind the Chief Secretary that the average tenant farmer believed that this phenomenal delay in placing him in his holding was caused by want of money, and that this was the real explanation which lay behind the present difficulties of the Department. But, whatever the explanation was, the fact remained that the proportion of estates which had been settled had remained practically at £5,000,000 per annum during the time this Government had been in office. He was sure that his hon. friends below the gangway would agree with him that in all parts of the country there was a growing dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs, and if this debate had done nothing else than to bring more forcibly before the Chief Secretary than previously the need of getting rid of that dissatisfaction, it would not have been altogether in vain. He begged very respectfully to ask the Chief Secretary to pursue his inquiries with the utmost rapidity, and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman at an early day would be able to come before the House ready to give them an explanation of the delay that had taken place in the past, and to assure them that it would not longer continue.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.) said that if he desired to see land purchase in Ireland brought to a stop he did not know that there were any men on whose political conduct he could more implicitly rely for assistance in that direction than that of the right hon. Gentleman who sat on the front Opposition Bench, and of some of the Members who sat behind him and who had spoken that night. The right hon. Gentleman the late Attorney-General for Ireland, as they all knew and were glad to acknowledge both in that House and outside, was a highly intellectual man. They were happy to acknowledge that in his profession he was second to none, but they regretted that, when he put on his war paint and entered into politics, he got rid of all his genial qualities and showed himself a most bitter Unionist, in many cases an opponent of the material welfare of the country, and certainly an opponent of good order and satisfaction among the people of Ireland. There was a section in Ireland and there was a section in England who were never very much concerned with the land, and who were, therefore, never very much in love with the Land Purchase Act of 1903. He saw one of the Labour Party on the other side of the House who was probably never very enthusiastic on the question of advancing £112,000,000 on the credit of the British taxpayer to buy out the Irish landlords. There was no man in Ireland or outside of it who had followed the course of the land question who was not aware of the fact that the Land Act of 1903 would never have been put upon the Statute-book unless the Irish people had received the assurances of the then Chief Secretary, the Member for Dover, that the two main purposes of the Act of 1903 were to reinstate the evicted tenants and give relief to the wounded soldiers of the land war, and to re-people the places from which the people were driven in Connaught and other parts of Ireland. There might be some people in Ireland and outside of that country who really were not convinced of the honesty of those statements. There were some persons who had not carefully read the history of the connection between England and Ireland. Dr. Johnson said—

> "If we unite with you we unite to rob."

There were people who believed that while there was unity between ancient and hereditary disputants in Ireland, between the landlords and the tenants, it was for nothing but the purpose of robbery. If he wanted to advocate before any audience that such was the real intention which the Government had at that time, if he wanted to say that the purpose of the landlords was to get hold of the £112,000,000, and that they had no notion whatever of putting themselves about to keep the other part of the contract, namely, the restoration of the evicted tenants on just and equitable terms, and the redistribution of untenanted lands in Connaught and other places, he need do nothing more than quote the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Dublin University and some others to prove that there was a great deal of truth in that contention. What had the right hon. Gentleman done that night? What had other hon. Gentlemen above the gangway who had spoken done? They had endeavoured to impress upon the Chief Secretary that it was monstrous that all this time of Parliament should be taken up in dealing with the question of the evicted tenants, and that the Treasury should be prepared to shovel out British money for the landlords to put in their pockets. Any unsophisticated farmer sitting in the gallery would be bound to come to the conclusion that the right hon. Member for the Dublin University really regretted that any time of Parliament was wasted last year on the Evicted Tenants Bill. He did not see how the farmer could come to any other conclusion from the speech which the right hon. Gentleman had delivered. But, of course, they all knew the right hon. Member for Dublin University. If ever there was a partisan the right hon. Gentleman was one. Sometimes when he saw the right hon. Gentleman in the House he had to rub his eyes, so changed was he from what he was outside. He would ask the right hon. Gentleman, notwithstanding what had been said just now by the hon. Member for Derry, whether they would have had a Land Act in 1903, in 1887, or in 1881, but for the agitation in Ireland. When he heard the hon. Member for Derry talking about the law-abiding Ulster tenants being anxious to take the benefits of the Act of 1903 he remembered that these gentlemen, not at all differing from their representatives, never risked anything, but were always prepared to take the profits that others obtained for them. He asked the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture to remember that the farmers whom the hon. Member represented made no inconsiderable income out of the legislation passed in that House for the Congested Districts Board, and other similar measures. A stranger would imagine that they were born in castles and had nothing to do with potatoes. The right hon. Member for Dover had said over and over again that the part of the Act of 1903 dealing with the evicted tenants question was meant mainly to apply to districts where the land war existed, and he left the House under no misapprehension on the point that it was designed to restore every evicted tenant in Ireland—the wounded soldiers of the land war—who had sacrificed their homesteads in the interests of Irish land reform and Irish nationality. But the object had not been attained. Last year the Chief Secretary said the evicted tenants on the Lansdowne estate had been restored. That was not so. At the present moment there were fifteen or twenty evicted tenants or direct representatives of evicted tenants on the estate who were still in the position they were in in 1902, and for whom nothing whatever had been done. The policy of the right hon. Member for Dover was that where untenanted land came into the possession of the Estates Commissioners, those who had first claim on the land before the uneconomic holdings were enlarged, or before the sons of farmers were provided with new holdings, were the evicted tenants or their direct representatives. He agreed with the Chief Secretary that there was not much comfort in restoring an evicted tenant who had been on the roadside for twenty-five years if he did not have a free grant to give him a start in life. There were two or three cases in connection with the Lansdowne estate, in which the Commissioners had absolutely refused to make free grants. He was personally acquainted with the cases. There was one letter of 27th November, 1907, in which the Commissioners said they had sanctioned an advance of £100 for buildings and a free grant of £200 for the purchase of stock, and the applicant was put down as having received the grant, though he had personal knowledge that at the date of the return she had not received a penny of it. The hon. Members for Waterford and East Mayo had made personal application to the Commissioners for free grants to a man who was returned as having had a grant towards buildings and who had not received a penny for the purchase of stock. He could never understand on what principle the Commissioners proceeded when they were reinstating a number of evicted tenants. To some they made no free grants at all and to others they did. Perhaps they acted on the report of an inspector if they had no personal knowledge as to the condition of the individual. If the tenants in the plan of campaign who were evicted in 1887–8 and had been on the roadside ever since were to be restored under a general Act of Appeasement he could not understand why some were to have free grants and others not, or why some should have £300 for the building of houses and others only £100, the same amount of money being expended on building the houses. There was a very important point with regard to the redistribution of untenanted land which had not yet been touched upon. He would ask the Chief Secretary to bear in mind an extraordinary letter from the Estates Commissioners to a board of guardians or district council. He did not know whether it was written by one Commissioner without the knowledge of the other two, or by two without the knowledge of the third, or whether it was written with the consent of all three. They said they would take care that when they purchased large quantities of untenanted land and it came to a question of redistribution, no man who had taken part in, given support to, or practised cattle-driving should receive any grant. In coming to the House that day he had noticed a masoned-up doorway and was told by a policeman that it was the entrance to the old Star Chamber. Were the Estates Commissioners to constitute themselves a Star Chamber? How were they to know who took part in cattle-driving or who maintained cattle-driving? If the right hon. Gentleman was going to tell the House and the country that the Estates Commissioners were to constitute themselves a Star Chamber and convict men behind their backs without a scintilla of evidence, not giving the accused party the opportunity of denying the charges made against them by policemen or interested parties looking for the land perhaps themselves, he would bring about his ears a good deal of annoyance which he had no desire that he should be troubled with. He did not understand, when the Estates Commissioners bought untenanted land or a plan of campaign estate, by what process they left out some direct representatives of evicted tenants and some who were actually evicted themselves and gave others a grant of £200 to build a new house. The Return showed a grant given for the pupose of stocking the land to a man who could be seen every day in the week walking between Trinity College and St. Stephen's Green in the uniform of the Dublin Metropolitan police. The name was William Dorley, and the Return showed how much public money he got. Dorley was undoubtedly a representative of one of the evicted tenants, but while they built him a house and gave him £200 of public money they left others who had no means of livelihood on the road.

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the Clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing Order No. 8, further proceeding was postponed without Question put.

TYNE IMPROVEMENT BILL.

(BY ORDER.)

Consideration, as amended, deferred till Thursday next, at a quarter past Eight of the Clock.

SUPPLY.

(CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

Postponed proceeding on Question proposed on consideration of Question, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,978, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the salaries and expenses of the office of the Irish Land Commission."

Which Question was, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,878, be granted for the said service,"—(*Mr. John Roche,*) —resumed.

Question again proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £160,878, be granted for the said service."

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.) in the Chair.

MR. JOHN REDMOND suggested that it would be well to withdraw this Vote and take up the Vote for the Agricultural Department. It was evident that before the end of the Session it would be necessary for them to have an opportunity of discussing some of the larger questions which arose in regard to the Land Commission Vote, and it would be an unfortunate thing if, by coming to a decision upon this Vote to-night, that opportunity was taken away from them. So far as the hon. Member for Galway's motion for a reduction was concerned, he was willing to withdraw it. They were all quite satisfied with the Chief Secretary's reply with reference to the Clanricarde Estate, and he would suggest that the Government should withdraw the Vote, and bring it up again on another occasion.

MR. KILBRIDE hoped the Government, in dealing with the Massareene Estate tenants, would see that the reserve fund was not applied.

MR. CHERRY said he would certainly keep that point in mind. In regard to what the hon. and learned Member for Waterford had said, they were quite willing to accede to his request to withdraw the Vote.

MR. JOHN ROCHE said that after the satisfactory reply made by the Chief

Secretary, for which he desired to thank him, he asked leave to withdraw his motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CLASS II.

£120,788, to complete the sum for the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction, Ireland.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND said he desired to take this opportunity of raising for the consideration of the Committee the question of afforestation in Ireland. He asked the Vice-President of the Agricultural Department to be good enough to make a statement, if he was in a position to do so, as to his own attitude and the attitude of the Government towards the afforestation movement in Ireland. It would be remembered that last winter a Departmental Committee was appointed to inquire into the whole subject of forestry in Ireland, and as he happened to be a Member of that Committee he thought he might claim for it that in a very short time it made, on the subject of forestry, what had been described as the most exhaustive investigation that had ever taken place. It often happened with Departmental Committees that they dragged on for a weary length of time and the public began to despair of any conclusions being arrived at. With regard to this particular Committee no time was lost; the investigation was entered upon at once; it was a thorough investigation from every point of view, and within the last month or so the Report of the Committee had been presented to the Department, and he supposed it was available to hon. Members. He did not desire to go into any lengthy description of the findings of the Committee, but he might say that the conclusions arrived at were amply justified by the evidence offered by a great number of witnesses. The Members on the Committee represented very generally the expert knowledge of the country on forestry. Lord Castletown, who had been deeply interested in the subject in connection with the Forestry Association, and other gentlemen well qualified to speak, assisted the work of the Committee. Evidence was taken of every conceivable description. They had expert evidence as to the suitability of Ireland from climatic and other points of view for the growing of trees. Evidence was also given as to the industries that were likely to be improved and kept going by means of forestry, and they had evidence of an extraordinary character as to the amount of money lost to Ireland every year because of its utter neglect of forestry. They found that thousands of pounds were being spent every year in Norway and Sweden and other countries for the purchase of wood pulp used in the manufacture of paper. They had also evidence given by those engaged in the timber trade in Ireland, including furniture manufacturers and other business men, who were almost unanimous in stating that they greatly feared they would not be able to keep their industries going unless some serious attention was paid to the industry of forestry in Ireland. Many of those wood industries in Ireland kept thousands of hands employed, and it would be an extremely disastrous thing if for the want of a little attention to forestry they were closed down. He knew that very little attention had been paid to the subject of forestry in Scotland and in England, but still less attention had been paid to the question in Ireland. There was only one country in the world as far as they could ascertain where there was a smaller area of land under forestry than in Ireland, and that was Iceland. The area of land under trees in England and Scotland was far smaller than in any other European country. Before the Committee expert evidence was given that from many points of view there was no country in the world more suitable for the successful growing of trees than Ireland. A leading authority on forestry in Scotland, the hon. Member for Leith Burghs, told the Committee from his own observation that he knew Ireland afforded greater facilities for the growing of many kinds of timber than Scotland, England, or any country he knew of. The Committee were told of many kinds of trees which could not be grown in Great

Britain which flourished and did well in Ireland. Surely it was not surprising that the Committee, in view of these facts, were unanimously in favour of something being done to preserve the forests at present in Ireland, and to see that other forests were planted. Two or three alternative schemes were reported upon, and it was pointed out that this matter of tree planting and the re-afforestation of a country must be and could only be carried out by the intervention of the State. They could not expect private individuals to embark on any scheme which would be sufficiently extensive to be of national benefit hereafter. Therefore, the State must intervene, and in doing so they would only be following the example of every other State in the world. If he had time he could easily give surprising illustrations from Germany, France, and all other nations where forests were a source of great national wealth. He was not going to ask the Government to adopt any particular one of the several schemes worked out by the Departmental Committee. He would confine himself to expressing the hope that the matter would not be allowed to rest. Whether the recommendations of the Committee were acceptable from the financial point of view or not, everybody would admit that the subject was one which ought to be taken up by the Government. The Report laid great stress on the fact that at this particular juncture there was an opportunity for the State's dealing with forestry in Ireland, which had never been afforded before, and which, if allowed to slip, might never occur again in their lifetime. The Land Purchase Acts had brought this question greatly to the front. The Estates Commissioners had pointed out over and over again that they had been embarrassed by the fact that there was no power in Ireland to enable them, in dealing with land purchase, to deal with forests and trees. What was the result? In many parts of the country the land was in process of changing hands. Forests had been destroyed. He was far from saying that tenants who bought land were anxious wantonly to destroy the timber on the land. Farmers were quite alive to the advantage of having the shelter of timber. But a great many of the landlords before they sold their property said to themselves that they might as well get all they could out of it, and they cut down the trees without any thought of the future. The result was that for some time past there had been a most lamentable destruction of timber. The value received had been comparatively trifling, because the timber, being immature, had fetched very little in the market. This process of cutting down timber had been carried out to some extent by the tenants, but to a larger extent by the landlords, and the whole proceedings had resulted in waste and disaster. The Government had now an opportunity of acquiring, with beneficial results to the whole community, existing forests and plantations, and for the purpose of afforestation land which was not suitable for anything else. The evidence given before the Committee showed that there were about 1,000,000 acres of land in Ireland perfectly suitable in every way for the planting of trees, and useless for anything else. Under these favourable circumstances he appealed to the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture to state his views on the Report of the Committee, and to say whether he could hold out any hope that the Government would act in the matter. Like every other scheme, this involved a question of money. They were always told that it was very hard to get money from the British Treasury. The Treasury, like other capitalists, were quite willing to provide money when it was made clear to them that nothing would be lost, and that, on the other hand, something would be gained. The Committee showed in the scheme they worked out that the expenditure of a moderate sum in tree planting in Ireland would in course of years prove a most profitable transaction. Of course, it would take a long time to show a profit, and that was why private capitalists could not be expected to embark in the work. Men could not wait forty, fifty, or sixty years, but the State could very well do so in a matter of this kind. Therefore, he did not think they ought to be shy in asking the Treasury for money. Supposing the Treasury would not look with favour on the request, they were on this subject, as on all other subjects connected with Ireland, brought back face to face with the question of self-government. Was there any man in his senses who would say that, if there was a responsible government in Ireland, the country would be left in the condition in which it was now in regard to forestry? With the exception of Iceland, Ireland was the only country in the world where this matter had not received some attention. If the Irish people had had their own Government for the last 100 years, this matter would not have been allowed to fall into its present lamentable state. One of the last things that the old Irish Parliament did was to vote a considerable sum of money for the purpose of encouraging afforestation. From that day to this, so far as he knew, not a single thought had ever been given to the question. There was now a disposition all round to recognise that there were certain things which Irishmen of all classes and creed were entitled to ask, and which ought to be granted. How could any man say, whatever his politics or religion, that in view of the history of this matter, it was not a reasonable thing to come and ask the Government at long last to do something in the matter? The hon. Member for Leith Burghs, who was a great authority on the subject of afforestation, had declared that the Report of the Committee was the most important and enlighteneng document on forestry ever presented to this House. If hon. Members would read the Report they would find that there was a strong desire among people of all classes that this source of wealth should be cultivated in future. He was sure that the Vice-President, whose sympathies were with the people, would do his best with the Treasury. He hoped that hon. Members from all parts of Ireland would support the claim for money to carry out this work, so that the hon. Gentleman when he went to the Treasury would be able to say that he had a united Ireland behind him.

Mr. POWER (Waterford, E.) expressed the gratitude of his colleagues to the hon. Member for East Clare for introducing this subject, and for the care and trouble he took as a member of the Committee which inquired into it. This was a matter on which men of all politics and creeds could agree. Anyone who read the Report would see it was generally recognised that in every country naturally the duty fell on the State to attend to afforestation and to advance money at a liberal rate of interest for the carrying out of the work. He believed that the work could be made essentially productive. It was work which, if it was to be successfully done, should be done on a large scale, and private capitalists did not care to put money in such an enterprise, because they got no return for a considerable number of years. He asked the hon. Gentleman to note that localities protected from north and north-west winds grew most admirable timber. On the Connemara Mountains, which had an eastern exposure, plantations were made a number of years ago, and they were now doing splendidly; if larger areas were enclosed and properly drained, better results would follow. He insisted that re-afforestation was most desirable from a sanitary point of view. They all knew what ravages were caused in certain parts of Ireland from what was called the white plague; these were quite appalling. It was generally considered that the disease arose from the conditions under which the poor people lived—their poverty and their bad food; but there could be no doubt that climate had a great deal to do with it, and it was acknowledged that the climate of Ireland would be largely improved by its re-afforestation. They knew that a large number of small forests in the country had disappeared. He could not blame the landlords altogether, because they were as a rule poor, and when they saw plantations, the felling of which would bring them in considerable sums of money, it was natural that they should sell their trees. Unfortunately, in too many cases immature timber was cut down, and, so far from the forest area of the country being increased, it had rather decreased. He thought that there was now opportunity for the Estates Commissioners to acquire tree-denuded lands and hand them over for forest cultivation. In his own county of Tipperary the county council were really anxious to do what they could to forward this matter. What was called an "Arbor Day" was appointed some years ago on which the children and others planted trees in different localities. Unfortunatey the day selected for that purpose was 1st November, which happened to be a holy day of the Church to which most of the people belonged. But there was no reason why the date of "Arbor Day" should not be changed. His hon. friend informed him, and he knew it was the fact, that his county council had supported the different recommendations of the Committee, all of which, together with the evidence, were well worthy of perusal. He was aware that the Vice-President of the Department was in favour of this matter and had acknowledged that a great deal of Ireland was fitted for little else than tree growing, and if the hon. Gentleman saw that this work was seriously tackled he believed it would be productive of much benefit to Ireland both from a material and from a sanitary point of view.

MR. NOLAN (Louth, S.) thought that they were all indebted to his hon. friend the Member for East Clare for having introduced this question, which he considered was one of the most important matters that could be discussed in relation to the material well-being of the country. The suitability of Ireland from its size and climate for the growth of useful timber had been established beyond the possibility of doubt by the fact that at one time Ireland was one of the best-wooded countries in Europe, or perhaps in the world. Even to-day, on the tops of some of the hills and mountains, where at present not a shrub grew, the stumps of great forest trees were to be found, proving that these hills and mountains had at one time been covered with dense forests. Then those who were acquainted with the history of the much-vaunted British Navy in the early part of last century were aware that the wooden walls of England, so called, were built to a very large extent of Irish oak, and there was no better oak in the world. It had been stated with absolute truth that in any country where the timber had been destroyed that country was doomed to destruction, and on the other hand it had been proved, by practical experiment, that in countries where there were large tracks of barren land incapable of supporting man or beast these had been restored to fertility by a judicious system of planting. The best illustration of this was to be found in the south of France where the Government stepped in and reclaimed a large province from sandy waste. They began by planting grass to bind the sand, and then by planting the Maritime Pine and other trees. A country which at one time would not afford a living to a rabbit now supported 200,000 prosperous peasants, and was even now the health resort of people from this country. Again, they wanted employment in Ireland for their young men, and anything like a good and comprehensive scheme of re-afforestation in Ireland would find immediate work for between 40,000 and 50,000 men. It might be, and had been asked, what was the reason why Ireland was now stripped of forest trees, and had become one of the barest countries in Europe? It was indisputable that, in the first instance, the forests of Ireland were largely destroyed by the Government of this country for military purposes, because they offered an impediment to the march of the invading English armies, and afforded shelter to the natives. The work of ruin then commenced was carried out to the bitter end by an alien landed aristocracy grafted on to Ireland by the British Government. To satisfy the monetary wants of these gentry such of the forests as had been left by the Government were cut down and sold. Consequently, the Government of England owed it to Ireland to do something now to restore the forests of that country. In connection with the benefits which would accrue to Ireland from re-afforestation in addition to the provision of employment for so many thousands of young men, he might mention that forests would avert the disastrous floods to which Ireland was subject year after year. In the autumn and winter season thousands and thousands of acres of the richest land in Ireland were laid under water. A system of arterial drainage might be necessary, and it was a very good thing in itself, but it was beginning at the wrong end. The place to begin at was where the rain fell on the mountain and hillsides from which it rushed down into the plains and laid them under water, whilst at the same time it washed away the soil from the mountains and hillsides, which, carried away by the water, silted up the lakes, rivers, and harbours, and caused trouble there. He knew there were difficulties in the way of planting because in some parts the mountain sides were exposed to the whole force of the storms from the Atlantic, and in those parts it would be difficult to get a plant of any kind to grow. It might be almost necessary to build a wall to protect the plants from the storms of the west until they were strong enough to resist the force of the gales, and in their turn became the protection of the belts of timber which would be planted on the hillsides. He was glad to hear that the Report of the Committee was now ready and about to be circulated to Members. He rejoiced to hear that statement, because there were many Members who ought to know a great deal more of this subject. That they knew very little about it was probably due to the fact that they had been engaged in a fierce and bitter struggle in regard to other things, and in consequence this very important question had been neglected. The one comfort in the present position was that they now had a Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture who had goodwill and a practical turn of mind. He believed the hon. Gentleman would turn his attention to this matter, and do something in regard to it. Even if the hon. Gentleman was a greater man than he was the obstacles standing in the way of his carrying out so great a work would probably prove to be too much for him. But he hoped that the hon. Gentleman, with his usual courage, would attack the problem and do something to promote this great work, which would be a great service to the present and a source of great blessing to the future generations of Ireland.

*MR. MULDOON (Wicklow, E.) desired to associate himself with the statement made by the hon. Member for East Clare and to assure the hon. Member who was now Vice-President of the Board that in Ireland there was the greatest feeling upon this subject. He hoped the hon. Gentleman would signalise his advent to office by taking some steps in the direction indicated by the hon. Member for East Clare. He, however, was afraid that the difficulties in the hon. Gentleman's way would prove too much for him. But the time was opportune, because the land was passing now from one class to another, and the anxiety in Ireland was great, with regard to the disappearance of the woods, at this moment. He hoped in the land legislation to be promoted this year some provision would be inserted to prevent the waste that was going on at the present time in that direction. As to the difficulties in the way, he was afraid the appointment made by the Treasury recently of one of their clerks to the position of Treasury Remembrancer was a sinister appointment so far as the financial relations between the two countries were concerned. He had noticed a disinclination to raise the wages of the workmen in the Phoenix Park from 15s., but the salary of the Treasury Remembrancer had been increased by £200. Until the hon. Gentleman became the Vice-President Irishmen had no confidence in the Board of Agriculture, and he hoped the hon. Gentleman would do all that lay in his power to justify the confidence placed in him in all parts of Ireland and would make a commencement in this important matter of forestry. He, however, rose to call attention to the treatment meted out to one of the officials in the forestry branch of the Department. Mr. Ellison, who carried on the business of afforestation, was an officer of acknowledged competence and capacity. He was threatened with dismissal six months ago. Nothing was done then, but he had now been notified that his office of Inspector of the Department of Forestry would come to an end in three months time. If the Board of Agriculture was going to commence this important work in forestry, why were Mr. Ellison's services being dispensed with at this time? There was no more competent man for this work in Ireland at the present time, and feeling in the county of Wicklow on the way in which he was being treated was very strong. The head of the Department ought to follow the declared policy of the Government to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas, and he had had an index of the feeling of Wicklow on this question, MR. JOYCE (Limerick) desired to associate himself with the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken on the question of forestry in Ireland, and to express the hope that this important question would be pressed home on the Board of Agriculture. He rose, however, for the purpose of drawing attention to another branch of the Department, that dealing with technical education in Ireland. When the Department was formed the people of the country took up the question of technical education in a very wholehearted way. The county councils and borough councils, who were in many cases already too highly rated, cheerfully burdened themselves with still heavier rates to forward the movement of technical education. Since its formation, he had been a member of the Technical Education Committee of his own city, and he had also for four years been a member of the central board in Dublin. This question, like that of afforestation, embraced all shades of opinion in Ireland. Men from all parts and of all shades of political opinion and religion, worked in the most harmonious manner in the interests of technical education, which had been more or less—and more rather than less—starved by the Treasury. He would like to know why there was not a representative of the Treasury present. If there had been one present, he would perhaps have spoken to him more strongly than he was speaking, because the Treasury had treated the public bodies in Ireland in a most scandalous manner. The Vice-President of the Department, during his tour of Ireland, had seen for himself the necessity of increased expenditure in connection with technical education. Towns and cities had burdened themselves in no small way by raising considerable sums to build institutions, and obtain requisites for technical classes. When public bodies had done this and people had shown themselves anxious to take advantage of technical education in large numbers, why should the Treasury have stepped in and cribbed, cabined, and confined the efforts made? The Vice-President of the Department, when at Limerick last winter, saw the technical classes at work, and finding that they had had to borrow £10,000 to help to to build a new institute, he was so struck with the requirements, that he publicly stated that he would do his very best with the Treasury to get a special sum of money for Ireland which he would divide fairly over the whole of the country as free grants towards the building or equipping of technical schools. They were sorry to find that the hon. Gentleman had failed, but they were not a bit surprised. The English Treasury always balked at giving a small sum for any purpose in Ireland. They were not begging this money from the Treasury. They asked it as a right, because they filched ten thousand times more from them every year. They never balked at millions when they were for palatial buildings for the War Office or the Admiralty, but when it was a question of equipping the youth of Ireland to fight the battle of life by giving them the opportunity of technical classes and putting them on an equal footing with other boys, then the Treasury always put its foot down and gave excuses. He asked the Vice-President in conjunction with the Leaders of the Nationalist and Ulster Unionist Parties to try and bring pressure to bear upon the Treasury to get a fair instalment of money to be devoted as free grants towards building technical institutes or equipping technical classes in Ireland. They were satisfied to bear their fair share of the burden; but the Vice-President knew that the institute in Limerick had to be cut down from £16,000 to £10,000, because that was the amount they would be able to borrow. The institute therefore would not be fully built or equipped. They would greatly have liked to have had the £5,000 or £6,000 which the Vice-President promised to get for them.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, (Tyrone, S.): I tried to get it.

MR. JOYCE said they built on that promise with a reasonable hope that the money would be granted, and that they would be able to build and equip their schools in a proper manner. This did not apply to Limerick alone; it applied all over Ireland. They saddled themselves with heavy rates and tried to forward the great system of technical instruction, and it was not too much to ask the English Treasury out of the immense surplus sums at their disposal to devote a small sum to enable the county and borough councils in Ireland to equip their schools in a fair and reasonable manner. He hoped the Vice-President would continue to press the matter upon the Treasury. He would certainly have the support of the Irish Party, and he hoped he would have the support of the Unionist Party in Ulster. It would be money well spent in the interests of the Irish people.

*MR. BARRIE thought that on the subject of afforestation Ireland was absolutely united. He hoped they would have an intimation from the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture that the Government, realising the urgency and importance of the matter, would see their way to do the generous thing and begin some experimental planting and to promise that they would do something substantial in a very few years. Reference had been made to "Arbor" day, and he would be happy if it could be revived and a more suitable date selected for the purpose. In doing so they would be following the example of America, where it was very popular. It had also been mentioned that Ireland imported wood pulp very largely for paper making. It would, of course, be many years before they could hope to have a full home supply, but it seemed strange when Ireland was so suited for tree growing that they should require to import their material for paper making. He wished to refer to some of the other activities of the Department, The last speaker dealt very eloquently with the question of an additional grant for the building of technical schools. He was more than pleased to hear that the city of Limerick felt such confidence in the value of technical education that they had erected an institute costing the substantial sum of £10,000. They, however, who represented rural constituencies thought that cities of importance like Limerick had financial resources that made it less necessary for them than for smaller towns to rely upon the generosity of the Treasury, and they hoped they would be able to press their claims upon the Treasury with more success this session than last.

MR. CARLILE called attention to the fact that there were not forty Members present.

House counted; and, forty Members being found present—

*MR. BARRIE, continuing, said that with regard to winter dairies he would be glad if the President would tell them what progress had been made since last year. They were fully alive to the importance of Ireland being a butter-exporting country, not in the summer season only, but during the whole course of the year. It was not entirely satisfactory to find in their large cities Danish butter frequently sold in the winter. It was rather inconvenient to have this Estimate presented before the annual Report of the Department was in their hands, but they knew that very great progress had attended the efforts of the Department during the last season, while acknowledging that it was with some surprise that he found an additional amount of £5,000 put down for increased salaries. That was a very substantial increase. It included an increase of £200 to the Secretary of the Department. He thought Mr. Gill deserved the increase it was proposed to give him and he hoped it would not be questioned. The additional grant for arts and sciences was of the greatest encouragement to technical schools all over the country, but the expansion of the allowance was likely to increase because of the liberal policy pursued during the past two sessions. They now had three grades of classes, and under the new scheme of allowances the grant-in-aid for the senior classes was very substantial indeed, and had been very welcome to technical committees. But the very success which had attended this more liberal policy would lead to larger demands next session. He hoped the Vice-President would bear that in mind, and satisfy the Treasury that no money had been better invested in Irish education in the present generation. He was most anxious to see this policy continued and extended. He was sorry he could not congratulate the Department on equal success in the development of the fisheries of the country. One explanation frequently urged was the want of a proper coastal patrol. The Department had for several years employed two detective steamers, but how a sensible body of men could expect to patrol the fisheries effectively, with vessels of nine knots, to overtake and capture trawlers which could steam fifteen knots, was one of the conundrums which he would leave the Department to explain. There was to be an addition to the fleet, but they did not know what the speed of the new cruiser would be.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Between fourteen and fifteen knots.

*MR. BARRIE said that was progress in the right direction, though he would rather have had a knot or two more. Taking it all in all they were satisfied with the progress the Department was making and they realised that the Vice-President had acquitted himself successfully, except in one important particular. It would be the general desire of the House to remember that Sir Horace Plunkett was the real author of the Department. A number of Nationalist Members had actively associated themselves in the work of the Department when it was in charge of Sir Horace Plunkett, and they would bear him out that except in one important point no change had been made in the general line of the work of the Department. It was therefore with the more regret that in one matter a very sudden change had taken place in the view of the Vice-President who had expressed himself as disapproving of the annual sums that had been for several years given to the Agricultural Organisation Society. There was a sharp diversity of opinion on the Agricultural Board, but it was thought that satisfaction had been reached in the compromise suggested by the Vice-President that the grants hitherto given to that society in aid of Agricultural Societies all over the land should be continued for the next three years diminishing annually. A little later Sir Horace Plunkett delivered a lecture in the course of which he criticised previous criticisms of a prominent Member of the Nationalist Party. An over-zealous friend of his sent that lecture to a well-known Nationalist in St. Louis. It was then said that Sir Horace Plunkett, the head of the Agricultural Society, had no right to make the criticism that he did so long as he was receiving a subsidy from the Department. The arrangement made by the Council which was to continue for three years was suddenly altered by the Vice-President and the Council, and the grant terminated on the ground that Sir Horace Plunkett had been a party to the sending of this now famous letter which did not bear the interpretation which the Vice-President placed upon it. That treatment was unfair to Sir Horace Plunkett, who had always acted unselfishly. He also complained that that was not the way a public board should be treated. He wished to associate himself in the remarks made in condemnation of the course taken by the Rev. Father Finlay, who, on Tuesday, raised a protest against it at the meeting in Dublin. He had always held that the House and the Government had not treated Sir Horace well, and he was sorry to see the Council approving the further course taken by the Vice-President in connection with that letter. That was the only criticism he had to make on the conduct of the Vice-President. He had admired the energy which he had displayed in furthering the work of the Department, but he was keenly disappointed that he should have so acted. There was a letter in the *Irish Times* that day, over the signature of Sir Horace, repudiating absolutely that he knew anything of that letter being sent to America. The bulk of the House were prepared to accept the word of honour of Sir Horace Plunkett in this matter.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.) said he had listened to the high tribute of praise which had been paid to Sir Horace Plunkett. His only regret was that this enthusiasm for Sir Horace Plunkett's services had so lately manifested itself. He had not forgotten that it was the Unionist Party in Ireland that drove Sir Horace Plunkett out of public life, because he had the temerity to appoint an Irish Catholic as Secretary to the Agricultural Department. For this the

Unionist Party selected an official candidate with the result that Sir Horace Plunkett's seat was handed over to the Nationalists. From the day they drove Sir Horace Plunkett out of Parliament to the present hour the Unionists would not touch him with a 40 ft. pole, and in all the vacancies which had taken place in Ulster since that time they would not even allow Sir Horace Plunkett to get within talking distance of the electors. If Sir Horace Plunkett was all that the hon. Member for North Londonderry had claimed, why was his name not mentioned in conection with the representation of Fermanagh, and why did the hon. Member not retire in favour of this saviour of Ireland? Probably the hon. Member had his eye upon a Judgeship, and he preferred to stay where he was. He thought it was rather hard lines upon the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture that he should be blamed for all the doings of Sir Horace Plunkett, when the two hon. Members sitting on the Unionist Benches were the men who had kept him out of Parliament. He wished to re-echo the expression of regret which had fallen from the hon. Member for the City of Limerick at the absence of any representative of the Treasury. He anticipated that the Vice-President would offer them any amount of sympathy and would say he had no money for them. During this debate, beyond a fleeting visit of half a minute paid by the Secretary to the Treasury, there had been no representative of the Treasury to listen to the statements from the Irish Benches, or to answer questions which were of very grave import to the people of Ireland at the present time. He anticipated that when a count was moved some one would come in from the Treasury, but even then they failed to put in an appearance. Although the Treasury officials were paid large salaries they would not come in to listen to the debate, and he appealed to the Vice-President to make a note of what had been said about them. The hon. Member for East Clare and the hon. Member for South Louth had spoken upon the question of afforestation. He thought that was a matter which ought to receive the prompt and serious attention of the Treasury. Large plantations and woods were now, through the operation of the Land Act, passing from the landlords, and unless they were acquired by the State they would fall into the hands of the timber merchants. Now was the opportunity for the British Government to step in and save the situation. He hoped the Vice-President would make reports to the Treasury in favour of acquiring those woods before such a course was rendered impossible. He agreed with what had been said about the importance of the fishing industry, and the necessity for the Department of Agriculture taking some more serious steps. The hon. Member for Derry had expressed the hope that there would be some better patrolling of the coast by steamers. He also was anxious that that should be done, but it ought not to be done at the expense of the funds of the Department. The amount available for the fisheries was about £10,000, about £4,000 of which was absorbed in patrolling the coast, which only left £5,000 or £6,000 available for actual fisheries work. That was only a caricature of attending to the fisheries of Ireland. If the explanation was that they had not sufficient money, he hoped the Vice-President would tell them plainly and place the responsibility where it ought to be placed—on the Treasury. The fishing population in Ireland was decreasing and the fishing industry was gradually dying out, and if something was not done immediately the result would be one which everybody would regret. He would like the Vice-President to tell them if anything was being done with regard to the spraying of potatoes. He trusted they would have a statement upon that question. Another important matter was the stopping of the sale of adulterated manures and seeds. Those articles were produced not by Irish but by English manufacturers, and they were being dumped in Ireland by English agents. He thought the Department ought to do something to put an end to a system which was defrauding and swindling the farmers of Ireland.

[Mr. EMMOTT took the Chair.]

*MR. HUGH LAW (Donegal, W.) said that comment had been made upon the paucity of the resources at the command of the Vice-President in the development of Irish fisheries. Probably no one felt more than he that an expenditure of £10,000 a year was exceedingly inadequate for proper development of what might be one of the greatest industries, and he hoped that the hon. Member would ask the Secretary to the Treasury to make special note of the matter. Anyone who looked at the return of the value of the fish landed on the Irish coasts and at the return for Scotland would be struck at once with the extraordinary contrast which the figures presented. And even from the comparatively miserable sum which the Irish fisheries yield a considerable allowance had to be made for fish landed from vessels which were not Irish. The practical matter, however, to which he wanted to draw the attention of the Vice-President was the familiar subject of whales. He would ask very seriously what steps he contemplated in view of what appeared to many to be a very serious danger menacing the fisheries of the west coast of Ireland. At considerable cost and great effort a relatively great industry had been built up, especially by the Congested Districts Board on the west coast of Donegal. He could not contemplate what would happen if anything should occur to destroy that industry in his own district, for instance, where the Poor Law valuation was only £12,000 a year and the value of the fish landed at one pier in 1906 something like £20,000. It was quite clear that was an industry they could not afford to play with. A Norwegian whaling company proposed to establish a whaling station on the coast of Donegal. In deference to representations made to the Irish Government and the Board of Trade the company withdrew its application and proceeded to transfer its attention to the coast of Mayo. It was not a local, but a national matter. The operations of a whaling company extended over a large area and he wished the Vice-President to state how he proposed that the regulations as to the restriction of whaling to the limits approved were to be enforced. The hon. Gentleman had already told him in answer to a Question that it would be done by the fleet at the disposal of the Department. He was under the impression that the fleet consisted of one vessel.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Two vessels.

*MR. HUGH LAW said the hon. Gentleman had a greater naval power than the Sultan of Morocco who had only one vessel.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: The two-Power standard.

*MR. HUGH LAW had no doubt they were excellent boats, admirably commanded, but he wished to know how these two vessels could watch the operation of the whaling vessels in addition to patrolling the whole coast of Ireland. The attitude of the Department was that if a whaling station was established in a district where there was no existing fishery, no harm could be done. The hon. Gentleman was aware that that was not the view held in Shetland, where a whaling station was established a few years ago. He had had figures supplied to him showing that whaling operations were most dangerous to fisheries. In one district in Shetland in the year before the whaling station was established, that was to say, July, 1901, 6,000 crans of herrings were landed, and in July, 1907, the number had sunk to seven crans. In another district 3,000 had sunk to nothing. In another district, 19,000 had sunk to four. In another, 3,000 had sunk to none. In another, 4,000 had sunk to nothing. In another, 10,000 had sunk to 100. In another, 30,000 had sunk to 6,000, which though but one-fifth of the former figure yet represented the smallest diminution within the whaling area. While that was the case within the area over which whaling operations were carried on, his information was that the fish landed over Shetland showed no decrease at all. That was relied upon as showing that the whaling had not been deleterious. There had been, he was informed, an actual increase in the fish landed outside the area of the whaling operations, and if that was so, the fact gave greater significance to the figures he had quoted as to the falling off in the whaling area. So far as he could see, there was nothing in the bye-laws to prevent a whaler from fishing in any water north or south provided the whaler kept outside the three-mile limit, and seeing that the greater part of the fisheries was carried on outside the three-mile limit, it seemed to him that wherever a whaling station was established there was still great danger to the fisheries on the whole coast. He wished to know what measures the Department proposed to take to safeguard the interests of the fisheries.

Mr. POWER said he desired to remind the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture that many years ago the Scottish ports succeeded in getting from the Admiralty a boat or two to protect the fisheries, whereas the Irish representatives who had been asking for a similar service had not been successful. He was informed that the Scottish coasts were patrolled by three boats. He would not go into the question of trawling beyond saying that there was no doubt that in the North Sea the supply of fish was decreasing every year. He believed that, unless something was done to protect the fisheries beyond the three-mile limit, there would continue to be a great deal of destruction of immature fish. He drew the hon. Gentleman's attention to the Port of Dunmore, where last year no fewer than thirty-six large herring-fishing craft came into the capital harbour, although he was sorry to say not so many of them were Irish. Dunmore was twelve miles from the nearest railway communication, and it was difficult when there was a large catch of herrings to get their hauls to market. It was true that the herring were erratic in their habits. He remembered four years ago the catch was so large and the difficulty of getting the fish to market so great that tons and tons of the fish were carted on to the land for manure. He asked the Vice-President of the Council to do what he could to improve the communications between the fishing station and the nearest railway.

Mr. GUEST (Cardiff District) wished to know the opinion of the Board of Agriculture upon the financial statement put forth in the Report of the Committee on Forestry. Those who had read that Report must have been impressed with the general consensus of opinion as to the profitable results of sylviculture when carried on to a large extent instead of in small plantations. He hoped the Vice-President would be able to indicate where there were large tracts of land in Ireland which might be usefully and profitably planted, and if the Irish Government were prepared to assist re-afforestation on a large scale by the compulsory acquisition of land. Were the Government prepared to make any recommendations to the House on the subject? There was a precedent for this in the recent English Small Holdings Act.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said that they had had a very interesting debate with only one unpleasant feature, and that was the charge against himself in connection with the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. The Member for North Londonderry stated that the one and only thing during his year of office to which he objected was that he thought he had committed a great error in undoing the work of Sir Horace Plunkett in this respect. He would state what had actually taken place. When he went into office it was true that he found a Parliamentary Grant to the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society of £4,000 a year in existence. It had been much more than that some years ago. He further found that great dissatisfaction existed amongst the traders in the country with the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society. It had been said that he objected to co-operation. He believed in co-operation, and that it was necessary in present circumstances; but he held that if co-operation was to exist it ought to be self-supporting, and not to be dependent upon State aid. He therefore proposed that a grant of £3,000 should be continued for the year that was running, then reduced to £2,000 the following year, and then to £1,000, and that thereafter the Vote should cease. The Agricultural Board adopted the view of the Council and that arrangement was agreed to. The hon. Member for North Londonderry said that this compact had been set aside. The hon. Member was right in saying that the arrangement had been set aside, but he was not right in putting the responsibility upon himself. He was faced one morning by the most extraordinary letter, which had been sent to the newspapers by a well-known gentleman who had at one time been in the service of the Department and was a warm friend of Sir Horace Plunkett, announcing that the Department had cut off the supplies, that the people of the country must choose between the parties, that they must make up their minds "to clear,"—he used the exact words—"Dillon and the Parliamentarians" out. And he said that he had been requested by Sir Horace Plunkett to forward a newspaper containing a report of his speech. Therefore he (Mr. Russell) concluded, perhaps wrongly, that Sir Horace Plunkett had probably also given a hint to send a letter along with it. He had to make up his mind what to do. He saw the work of the Department imperilled. He saw there was danger so far as the Nationalists were concerned, of its being imperilled. It was not the object of the Board to give £3,000 for the purpose of clearing "Dillon and the Parliamentarians" out. That Board was the supreme authority. The Council had no executive power. Here was what took place. After the full draft of this letter and of the speech delivered by Sir Horace Plunkett at the annual meeting of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society had been considered this resolution was arrived at. They decided that the impression which these letters, articles, and speeches had created, namely the association of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society with hostility to a political party and to certain trading interests, greatly increased the difficulties of the Department already for some years very considerable in helping forward the co-operative movement in Ireland and made it impossible for the Department in the interests of their schemes throughout the country to continue their present relations with the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society.

MR. BARRIE: How many members of the Board were present?

*MR. T. W. RUSSELL said there was a full attendance of the twelve members. That resolution was passed unanimously. The Board agreed to continue the grant for the present year in order that no official with whom an engagement had been made should suffer. He called the Board to consider it and he gave his advice before the decision was arrived at. He took the responsibility now, but he wished it to be understood in Ireland that a full Board came to the conclusion that the work of the Department would be seriously imperilled if they were associated with the work of clearing "Dillon and the Parliamentarians" out. He hoped that both organisations now would be allowed to go their own way and that they had heard the last of this unsavoury business. He came now to the subjects which had been raised in the course of the debate, all of which involved the raising of money. Take afforestation. The position he had been placed in was this—he saw that the country was being denuded of timber; the landlords who had not sold were cutting it down; the tenants who had bought not realising the value of the timber, were cutting it down and selling it. The Commissioners when they sold an estate had to sell the timber and there was no market but with the timber merchant. He appointed the Departmental Committee, which reported without delay, so that the question was really urgent. In two cases the Department had stepped in when the Commissioners were selling, but that was not work originally contemplated by the Department, and unless something was done the Commissioners must proceed and sell the timber. There was no necessity for compulsion in this matter. The land was being sold and if the timber was not got now they would not be able to get it hereafter. That was another cause of urgency. The county councils were anxious to help, but nothing could be done when the land had changed hands. All public bodies and all public men who had studied the matter saw the necessity for it and were engaged in pressing it. The question really was, then, How was the difficulty to be met? It could not be met by private enterprise. No private person do it. The State alone could do it, and it was not so much a question of expenditure, as of investment. The Government invested in a Scottish forest the other day and they did well. It did not mean a large expenditure of money at all; it meant a modest investment to begin with. The hon. Member for Clare and other hon. Members had pressed him to take action in the matter. He had taken action. In the first place he had made out a case by establishing the Committee; and he had made as strong appeals to the Treasury as he possibly could. He had pointed out all the facts, that the opportunity would pass if it was not availed of, that it was not a question of expenditure, but of investment, and that it was a modest sum to begin with; and all he could say was the Treasury gave him the necessary money for the committee of investigation. He would plead that they should not allow that money to be thrown away but should enable them to go forward at once. They had everything ready to begin and he really had hopes that they would succeed in getting the work done. He knew the Treasury had other calls for money for Ireland just now—for the Universities Bill, for the congested districts, and for other things—but he hoped he would have a look in and be able te get this work started. The next question was one raised by the hon. Member for Wicklow, with regard to an official of the Department, and he said that he (Mr. Russell) ought to remember that the Liberal Party were pledged to govern Ireland according to Irish ideas. He really wanted the hon. Member for Wicklow to tell him if this was an Irish idea: Mr. Ellison was engaged to carry out a forestry experiment in County Wicklow. The work was finished, and they had nothing more for him to do. He was under three months notice. All the public bodies in Wicklow had protested against his dismissal, but was there anybody in this House who would tell him that he ought to spend £300 a year upon a man for whom he had no work? Was that an Irish idea?

*Mr. MULDOON: Will the hon. Gentleman say whether he has not got a gentleman from Scotland doing the same work and what salary he is giving him?

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: There is no gentleman from Scotland or anywhere else who is taking his place. I have told him his case will be considered on the first opportunity and I cannot go beyond that. I really do not think I ought to be pressed to keep a man for whom I have no work.

*Mr. MOONEY (Newry): What work have you got for Mr. Porter to do?

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I have work for Mr. Porter. He is earning his salary. And as a Civil servant Mr. Porter could not be dismissed.

*Mr. MOONEY: Since when?

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said he was doing as hard work as any other man in the Department at the present time. Mr. Ellison came upon a temporary engagement, and he had no right to keep him when his work was done. The hon. Member for Limerick had raised the question of building grants for technical schools. He admitted the importance of it. Nothing had struck him so much as the rapid progress in technical education in Ireland. It was not more than four or five years since the great work began; and there were now, apart altogether from work in secondary schools, which was very great, 129 technical schools and institutes almost entirely in the urban districts of Ireland. There was no question of its success. He quite agreed it was a great hardship for local authorities to have to dip into the rates for building technical schools and institutes. What took place was this. There were nine or ten towns in Ireland which had pledged their rates for building purposes. Every town could not afford to do that. That, however, was not the only difficulty. When they got their loan for technical education buildings, the first charge upon it was for interest and sinking fund, so that technical education was actually robbed of part of the grant. He had done his best, and he had been refused. The Treasury had the last word. The Member for Limerick who was on the Technical Board heard the Treasury letter read the other day. He knew that the Board made the best case possible, but they were not able to get the money, and without it they could not give the building grant. He promised to do his best to get it but he had failed, and that was all he could say.

Mr. JOYCE: Oh, you must try again.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said the Department had been interested in winter dairying for years. It was a great loss to Ireland that to all intents and purposes they only made butter for seven or eight months in the year, and that there were four months when they practically made none. They lost the English trade, which went to Denmark, and it was very difficult to get back. It was a great drawback and a great hardship. They had been carrying out experiments to convince the Irish farmer that it was possible to have winter dairying and to make it pay. He had had a deputation of farmers from Limerick, but they would not touch it. They were, however, carrying out further experiments—an elaborate experiment had been carried out in Cork at the Agricultural Institute, and another at a creamery which paid higher prices in winter than in summer, and they were doing their best to convince the farmers that it was possible to do this, to make money, and not lose it. It was a great drawback to the butter trade in Ireland that it should cease for four months and lose the market. The hon. Member had also referred to the question of fisheries. In 1899 Parliament constituted the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction the fishery authority for Ireland, and in its wisdom set aside £10,000 a year for the purpose of developing the industry and managing and regulating it. It was true the Sea Fisheries Fund of £25,000 was also handed over. Parliament provided and intended that that should be dealt with in giving small loans to fishermen. The hon. Member for North Derry was very jocular over the absurdity of supposing that a vessel like the "Helga" could catch trawlers. But the vessel had gone to the Black Sea and a new "Helga" was launched on Saturday, which could steam at fourteen to fifteen knots, and which he thought would be very successful. The whole policing of the coast, amounting to something like £5,000 a year, came out of the £10,000 set aside for the development of the industry. Hon. Members came to him every day. One had asked him the other day for the repair of a pier, which ought to be done. It would cost a trifle of £12,000. How could he do it with the money at his disposal? He had not the power of getting it from the Treasury. Parliament must see to that. He was only letting the light in. It was perfect nonsense for Members to come to him day after day as they did. They presented most excellent cases, and many of them were urgent. They asked for money for piers, boat slips, and all sorts of things. At the most he had £5,000 a year to go round the whole coast of Ireland, and it could not be done. In regard to spraying potatoes they had already twenty-seven inspectors in the West of Ireland making the arrangements. They were providing for the machines to be sold at cost price or hired, and were doing their best to see that the spraying material used would be genuine and not spurious. That was a very difficult operation considering the number of English companies that were trying to foist spurious material on them. They were leaving nothing undone in the West of Ireland and they were not confining themselves merely to congested districts. There were regions outside the congested districts which were quite as much in need of help as the congested districts themselves. They were making preparations and they would do their best to see that no damage arose from lack of spraying. As to the question of adulteration of seed and manure and feeding stuff, there were companies engaged in selling calf meal that was not only useless, but absolutely pernicious, and it was an extraordinary thing that these were English companies. But the Irish people were not without blame, because Irish materials could be had. But such was the invincible prejudice in Ireland itself against everything Irish that they could not get the people to buy them, and they were buying these English mixtures when they could get the Irish materials at less money and absolutely pure. What were they to do? A black list of these English companies had been suggested, but the Law Officers had stopped him from making a black list.

An HON. MEMBER: Would the hon. Gentleman mention the names of the English companies now?

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said they could not publish the names. They would subject themselves very likely to half a dozen libel actions. That might do for the lawyers, but it would not do for the Department. What he had offered to do was this. He had said that if the Irish Members wanted the information he would give it in Parliament, where he was quite safe in doing it. The question of whaling was a new one. It was only a few months ago that they had had to deal with it, and the hon. Member for Donegal was hardly fair to the Department. It had been proposed to start a whaling station off the coast of Donegal. They had satisfied themselves that it was dangerous where there was a fishing industry. They had issued a bye-law prohibiting it. They had now gone to the West of Ireland. They had bought or leased an island from the Congested Districts Board where there was no fishing industry. There was no law against it and the Department had no power to stop it. What he proposed to do was to introduce a Bill giving the Department power to prohibit or sanction the industry as they thought fit. Their expert advisers stated that the evidence was not conclusive as to the injurious character of the industry. Of course they could not be issuing bye-laws for every part of the coast, and therefore they proposed to get power under a Bill which would put the responsibility upon the Department. With regard to Donegal he had only the same answer to make, viz.—that all the money of the Department had been appropriated and until more money was provided he could not do anything in the matter.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND referred to the request which had been made for repairs to the pier in the county of Clare. The erection of this pier had been arranged for in one of the poorest fishing districts. It was to cost £1,200, and the money was allocated. The Agricultural Department was to give a certain amount, and so was the county council, but because of some technical disability attaching to the action of the county council they were prevented from handing over their share of the money. The late Chief Secretary promised to introduce a Bill upon this point before he went to America, but he forgot all about it, and for lack of that measure giving the county council the necessary power those poor unfortunate fishermen had been denied this pier. Nobody opposed the Bill and he would like to know when it was going to be introduced. It could be introduced at once and then the pier could be built.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said he was quite ready to introduce the Bill if the Treasury sanctioned it.

MR. POWER said the patrolling of the coast was costing £5,000 a year. He wished to know if it was a fact that the Admiralty largely patrolled the Scottish coasts and saved the Scottish Department that expense. If that was the case why could a similar thing not be done for Ireland by the Admiralty and thus save them this expense ?

MR. FFRENCH said it had been stated that £12,000 would be required for the improvements he had referred to. He wished to point out that it would not cost so much. What they required was an extension of about 60 yards and that could be done for about £4,000. The Wexford County Council had expended thousands upon the fishery piers and surely they were entitled to a little assistance from the Board of Agriculture in a matter of this kind.

Vote agreed to.

Resolution to be reported upon Monday next; Committee to sit again upon Monday next.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Ordered, That the Lords Message [this day] relating to the time and place of meeting of the Joint Committee on the Port of London Bill be now considered.

Lords Message considered accordingly.

Ordered, That the Committee of this House do meet the Lords Committee as proposed by their Lordships.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Message to the Lords to acquaint them therewith.

Adjourned at six minutes after Eleven o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 22nd May, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

London County Council (General Powers) Bill (Prince of Wales' consent signified).—Bill read the third time, and passed.

St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed with Amendments.

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [Lords]; Doncaster Corporation Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—As amended, considered; to be read the third time, upon Monday next.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill.—"to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Barry, Bradford (Yorks) and Sutton-in-Ashfield," presented by Mr. Masterman; supported by Mr. Burns; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 236.]

Padiham Urban District Council Bill—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Section A); Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

South-West Suburban Water Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP F).

Mr. Nussey reported from the Committee on Group F. of Private Bills; That the parties promoting the Pontypridd Water Bill [Lords] had stated that the evidence of Frederick E. Jacob, Mining Engineer, of Aberavon, Glamorganshire, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that his attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Frederick E. Jacob do attend the said Committee on Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Ordered, That Frederick E. Jacob do attend the Committee on Group F of Private Bills on Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the Clock.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Harrogate; and Somers Town; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Blaen Cwm; Brynteg; Clydach Merthyr; Corrwg Vale; Cymmer Drift; Garngoch (No. 2); Hafod; Killan; Llwynonn; Lower Gornal; Merthyr Llantwit; Nackerty; Plaspower; and Primrose; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Forres, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition in favour: From Bilston; and Bridlington; to lie upon the Table.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING, ETC., BILL.

Petition from Wandsworth, against; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions for alteration: From Bridport; Harrogate (two); London; and Stalybridge; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Bilston (two); Bridlington; Broughton; Brymbo; Bwlchgwyn; Cardigan (two); Cefn

Pychan; Colchester; Coniboro; Craigcefnpare; Cwmdu; Ditchling; Everton (three); Glasgow; Gowerton (two); Griffithstown; Harrogate; Hassocks; Hexham; Killay; Leytonstone (two); Liverpool (two); Manorbier; Monkhill; Newcastle Emlyn; Northallerton; Olrig; Ponkey; Pontardulais; Pontypool; Rossett; Rothesay; Runcorn; Sedgley; Sheffield; Steyning; Todmorden; West Norwood; Wick; Winnington; and Wolverhampton; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Govan; in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions against: From Edinburgh and Leith; Kintyre; and Stirling; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Alexandria; Annan; Coalsnaughton; Dollar; Glasgow; Govan; Grand Division of Scotland of the Order of the Sons of Temperance Friendly Society; Kilmarnock; and Thornhill; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petitions against, praying to be heard by counsel: From Conservators of the River Medway; Corporation of West Ham; General Shipowners' Society, London; and North London Railway Company; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

PUBLIC-HOUSES (EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Annan, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SHOPS BILL.

Petition from Wandsworth, against; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

MAGISTRATES (IRELAND).

Return [presented 21st May] to be printed. [No. 153.]

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON ACT, 1898.

Copy presented, of Amendment of Statutes 4, 26, 120, and 127, of the Statutes of the University of London, and of Statute 11 of the Statutes for the Management of University College, London [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

CEYLON.

Copy presented, of Correspondence relating to the consumption of Opium in Ceylon [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ST. VINCENT.

Copy presented, of Additional Rules made for the Government of the Prison in St. Vincent [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

GRENADA.

Copy presented, of Prison Rule abolishing the Punishment of Cutting the Hair of Female Prisoners in Grenada [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Thirty-fifth Annual Report by the Accountant for Scotland to the Scottish Education Department [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

LAND REGISTRY.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 19th February. *Mr. Rowlands*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 154.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Payment of Balance of Purchase Money for H.M.S. "Cyclops."

MR. F. E. SMITH (Liverpool, Walton): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he will state when the long overdue payment of the balance of purchase money to the vendors of H.M.S. "Cyclops" will be made; what are the technical reasons which have delayed such payment; whether the vendors are in any way responsible for the existence of such reasons; and, if not, what grounds exist for withholding interest on a payment which is now considerably overdue.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The technical reasons which have delayed the payment of the outstanding balance of £1,000 purchase money to the vendors of H.M.S. "Cyclops" are that when the vessel was purchased she was only in a partially completed condition as a merchant ship; large alterations were necessary to convert her to her present service, and it was impracticable till very recently fully to complete and test all those portions of the vessel that were bought from the vendors. Trials have now been made, their results are being considered in connection with the contract obligations of the vendors, and it is hoped that a settlement will be reached in the course of the next month. The vendors are not in any way responsible for fixing the date at which the necessary trials were made; but, although the vendors were not in any way so responsible, it was impracticable to determine, prior to the trials referred to, what balance might be due to the vendors, and consequently what interest, if any, might be due to them. Payment of such interest as may be adjugded due will be made when closing the accounts for this vessel.

Milk Supply Bill—Date of Introduction.

Mr. GUINNESS (Bury St. Edmunds): To ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is in a position to give a date for the introduction of his promised Bill to prevent the supply of dirty milk.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I cannot at present fix a date for the introduction of the Bill.

Loans to Scottish Museums—Fire Risks.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether any, and, if so, how many of the fifty-four lenders of objects to the Royal Scottish Museum during the years 1902 to 1907 were informed that these objects lay at owner's risk in case of fire; and whether he will take steps to see that this warning is now given to those who have not previously received it.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The director of the museum is not aware of any case in which loans to the museum have been accepted during the years 1902 to 1907 without the lender having been informed that the museum does not insure against fire. But, to meet any possible misunderstanding, he has recently taken steps to remind each individual lender of the conditions on which loans are accepted by the museum.

Registry of Deeds—in Ireland.

Mr. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state what are the fees payable on the registration in the local registry in Ireland of a deed other than a conveyance on sale or mortgage, as, for example, a conveyance to trustees on marriage of registered land the Poor Law valuation of which is £200; whether the charge is the same where the owners' title is registered subject to equities, and therefore not conclusive; what the registration fees on the registration of a similar deed in the Registry of Deeds would be, assuming it to be the ordinary case of one grantor, one denomination, and a memorial not exceeding seven folios; whether, in addition to the increased expense in registry fees in the local registry in such a case, the party has to bear the expense of a second deed declaring the trusts; whether it is any part of the object of a local registry to cheapen the transfer of land; and whether the fees in the local registry have been fixed with a view to securing that anything saved in solicitor's charges by having a local register is to go to the Treasury in fees.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) I am informed that it is not possible to give an Answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's Question without knowing the precise nature of the deed and of the amount of value transferred. The fee is the same whether the owner's title is registered subject to equities or not. With reference to the third paragraph of the Question, the fee in the Registry of Deeds for a deed such as that mentioned would be 8s. For the grounds of difference between the fees charged in the registry of titles and registry of deeds respectively, I may refer the hon. and learned Member to the Answer given by my predecessor to his Question of 31st March last. No second deed declaring the trusts of a marriage settlement is necessary. The Answer to the fifth paragraph is in the affirmative, and to the last paragraph in the negative.

Poor Law Children.

Lord EDMUND TALBOT (Sussex, Chichester): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state the number of children maintained in workhouses and workhouse infirmaries in London and in the provinces, respectively, on 1st January, 1908.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) On 1st January, 1908, the numbers of pauper children relieved in workhouses and workhouse infirmaries in England and Wales were as follows:—

	Number of Children chargeable to Poor Law Unions in London.	Number of Children chargeable to Poor Law Unions outside London.	Total.
(a) Not including insane and idiots—			
(i) In workhouses, otherwise than in infirm wards - -	1,184	13,872	15,056
(ii) In infirm wards or infirmaries - - - -	2,382	4,912	7,294
(b) Insane and idiots in workhouses* - - - - -	6	297	303
	3,572	19,081	22,653

* There were also 133 children chargeable to London Unions in district sick asylums, and 759 children in the imbecile asylums belonging to the managers of the Metropolitan Asylum District.

Imports of Chinese—Japanese Teas.

Sir CHARLES DILKE ((Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the statement of the quantity and value of tea imported into the United Kingdom placed before the House on 7th May, Japanese tea, such as Oolong from Formosa, appears under the heading China or under that of other countries.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Japanese tea, such as Formosan Oolong, is included in the statement referred to in the Question under the heading of "Other Countries."

Purchase of the Estate M. H. Franks in North Kerry.

Mr. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the estate of M. H. Franks in North Kerry has been offered for sale to the Estates Commissioners; and, if so, when was it inspected and reported upon, and when was, or will, an offer be made to the landlord.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have had an inspection made of the estate in question, and the report of the inspection was received in December 1907. A preliminary estimate of price was furnished to the owner in March last, but no reply has since been received from him.

Territorial Force—Excesses and Shortages.

Colonel IVOR PHILIPPS (Southampton): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether in the case of regiments or battalions of the Territorial Force, consisting of squadrons or companies administered by different County Associations, the excess in the squadrons or companies administered by one County Association may, with the approval of the County Associations concerned, be set off against deficiencies in the squadrons or companies administered by other County Associations to complete the establishment of the regiment until such excess is absorbed; and whether the pay and allowances of men thus in excess should be drawn by the associations to which they originally belonged or to which they are temporarily transferred.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The proposal of my hon. and gallant friend has been given very careful consideration. There are, however, many difficulties involved in his suggestion not the least of which is that of training, and, therefore, it has been decided that it is not practicable to accept it.

Travelling Allowances to Officers of the Territorial Force.

MR. TILLETT (Norwich): To ask the Secretary of State for War, whether having regard to the fact that, under Paragraph 356 of the Allowance Regulations of the Army, officers are directed always to travel first-class, he will consider the advisability of amending Paragraph 48 of the Finance Regulations of the Territorial Force, which directs that officers of that force are not to be allowed more than 1d. per mile for the journey to and from camp.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The travelling allowance of 1d. a mile is an all-round rate given to the County Associations in respect of the attendance of officers and men at the annual training in camp. The officers will travel in first class carriages as hitherto, and the cost will be defrayed by the associations. The allowance is based on the practice existing for many years past in the Volunteers.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. CAMERON CORBETT (Glasgow, Tradeston) said that the principle of the Bill which he asked the House to read a second time could be simply described. It was that the people in each locality should have the power to decide for themselves whether licences for the sale of liquor in their midst should be granted or not. They proposed to give to the people exactly the same power which a landlord had at present of vetoing the planting of a public-house on his property.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) called attention to the fact that forty Members were not present.

House counted, and forty Members being found present—

MR. CAMERON CORBETT said that the Bill provided that where the people of a neighbourhood did not desire to carry out so drastic a policy as no licences, they might vote in favour of a reduction of the existing licences by one-fourth. It might be contended that reduction by one-fourth would lead to a discrimination being exercised between the licences granted and those reduced; but the licensing justices in each neighbourhood knew pretty well which were the best and which the worst conducted. The fear of a refusal of a licence would do much to promote temperance; therefore it was a good thing that the choice should be left to the magistrates who were aware of the wants of the neighbourhood. He did not base his claim for support for the Second Reading of the Bill on any exceptional amount of drunkenness prevailing in Scotland. Hon. Members were aware that the net consumption of alcohol per head of the population was less in Scotland than in England or Ireland, and that the proportionate expenditure on drink in Scotland was also less than in either of these two countries. It had likewise been fairly clearly established that the amount of disease due to alcohol was smaller and the deaths were fewer in Scotland than in England. But really throughout the whole of the three kingdoms there was great need for any legislation which would limit the amount of damage being done by drink. The Report of the Peel Commission had described it as "a national degradation" and "a gigantic evil," so that that part of his case for the Bill now before the House was completely admitted. The question of what they were prepared to do in the matter of legislation did not depend on admissions of that kind but on the extent to which they came home to their minds and conduct. Perhaps the best illustration of that was the economic aspect of the waste that took place in connection with the large expenditure on liquor and the evils that flowed from over-indulgence in alcohol. Our best-known authority on political economy—Professor Marshall—had laid it down that the employer took as much for his money in those neighbourhoods where labour was paid the highest rate as he did where the labourer got the least reward. And Professor Marshall went the length of saying that cheap labour could never compete with dear labour in cheap production. Now, if that were the case, what an enormous economic loss in the efficiency of labour must there be if 6s. per week per family from wages was spent in drink instead of going in the direction of improving the food and clothing of the family and so increasing the demand for these products, and increasing at the same time the efficiency of the work which the head of the family discharged? The claim of Scotland to this legislation was based very largely on the fact that in that country there was no danger of going ahead of public opinion. Out of their seventy-two Members, sixty-one were pledged at the last general election in favour of this policy. Three of the remainder represented constituencies in which there had been a three-cornered fight, where, although the Member returned was opposed to this policy, the majority of the electors had voted in its favour. Two other representatives sat for University seats; so that they had only five residential constituencies in Scotland out of seventy which gave their votes against the policy included in the Bill. A very curious argument had been brought forward to show that popular opinion in Scotland was not favourable to this legislation. Hon. Members had received a circular from the Scottish Licensed Trade Defence Association in which the only argument put forward to show that this Bill was not supported by public opinion was that, in the recent Dundee election, out of 16,118 votes recorded the Prohibitionist candidate received only 655. [An Hon. Member: Hear, hear.] The hon. Member said "Hear, hear"; but was he aware that that Prohibitionist candidate was opposed to this Bill? That Prohibitionist candidate came and interrupted him at a meeting at Dundee; and at a great meeting in favour of this Bill in Glasgow, he had to ask the intervention of the meeting to protect him from the trouble which this Prohibitionist candidate caused by his persistent interruption. If the only evidence of the popular opinion in Scotland not being in favour of this Bill was the very limited support given to its bitterest opponent, his trade defence friends had great need of other arguments. As a matter of fact, at Dundee the Member at the head of the poll was one of the warmest supporters of the Bill, and the Labour candidate was also in its favour, so that the vast majority of the electorate of Dundee supported the Bill. The circular went on to say that in America and New Zealand this policy had proved a dismal failure. It had, on the contrary, been a great success. In New Zealand four votes had been taken since it was made part of public policy, and at every single vote there had been a great increase in the proportion of voters who favoured prohibition in their own locality. On the last occasion the majority in its favour was the greatest ever recorded. With reference to America, it had sometimes been said that the consumption of alcohol had not tended to diminish in the United States by the great wave of temperance legislation which had passed over that country. That was not the case. He had the most recent statistics on that point, which showed that in recent times there had been a conspicuous reduction in the consumption not merely of beer but of spirits as well in the United States. [An Hon. Member: In England also.] The circular stated that if they had prohibition areas, the adjoining areas would be incommoded by having more than the normal population to supply, and that the result would be frequent riot and disorder in districts subjected to continued invasion and overcrowding. It was a remarkable fact that none of those who opposed this

Bill and had all the local knowledge which members of the trade were supposed to possess, had declared that those evils had happened where the landlord had brought about prohibition by his own single will. There were large areas in Scotland, both urban and rural, where public opinion had been roused in favour of prohibition because of the experience of districts where prohibition existed. Moreover, the suggestion made in the circular was that the riot and disorder had been caused not through illicit drinking but in places where the public-houses were open. That was a very suggestive indictment against the trade by those who were engaged in it. He believed that this Bill would have its rejection moved by one English Member and seconded by another; but if any Scottish Member arose to oppose the Bill, he hoped he would say whether he was prepared or not to bring in a Bill for the abolition of Sunday closing. [AN HON. MEMBER: Certainly not.] The hon. Member said "Certainly not," but if that were the case and he was not prepared to take that course, or any step in that direction, then surely it was fairly established that Sunday closing in Scotland was supported by the nation. In Glasgow, Sunday drinking, as measured by the arrests for drunkenness, only amounted to one-sixtieth part of the total drinking of the week. Instead of Glasgow being a black day on Sunday, as it was in the days gone by, there was not a tenth part of the drunkenness that occurred on the average ordinary day of the week. It had also been said that the ten o'clock closing rule had proved a failure. The Glasgow authorities had statistics c mparing the twelve months before and the twelve months after the ten o'clock rule was put in force; and these showed not only that there had not been any increase of drunkenness, but that there had been an actual diminution of drunkenness. There was a period during which there was an increase in the arrests for drunkenness, but that was due to a new regulation that the policeman who had made an arrest for drunkenness had no longer to appear next morning to give evidence. Formerly a policeman knew that if he made an arrest for drunkenness he would have to appear early next morning at Court to give evidence, and that consequently he would be disturbed and lose his sleep; he, therefore, was unwilling to make the arrest. The new regulation naturally increased his willingness to arrest for drunkenness. Between 28th May, 1904, and 28th May, 1905—that was the year after the ten o'clock closing came into force—the arrests for drunkenness had diminished from 14,393 to 13,507. In the year before the new police regulation to which he had referred came into force the arrests numbered 16,281, and in the twelve months after the regulation was operative the number of arrests increased to 20,668. While statistics were valuable in helping one to come to a conclusion when carefully analysed, there was no guide so safe as that of the experience of those who had the opportunity of watching all the circumstances and had a chance of forming a judicial opinion upon them. Of more than 100 chief constables in Scotland who had given evidence on the point, only one had spoken against early closing, all the rest being in favour of it; while in no single town or city had the magistrates reversed the decision they had come to in favour of early closing. Early closing had undoubtedly caused a certain amount of inconvenience, but the magistrates in every town and city in Scotland had decided that the moral advantages and the greater welfare of the people more than counter-balanced that inconvenience. That was a very thorough test of the way in which this early closing legislation had commended itself to the magistracy and the people of Scotland. It seemed to him that the Scottish people could make a very strong appeal to English Members to support them in this national Parliament. They were not carried away with any visionary dreams of what might happen. They based their policy on practical experience. They knew that wherever local option had been tried by the will of the landlord it had done good and not evil; that in every country throughout the world, in America and in our Colonies, where it had been tried, public opinion in its favour had advanced, and that no case could be pointed out where local veto had been tried where there was not a stronger feeling in its favour now than ever before. He begged to move.

*Mr. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross) said he rose with considerable pleasure to second the Second Reading of this Bill. He was not a teetotaller himself, but during the twenty-three years that he had been more or less connected with public life, he had always supported and advocated the right of the people in these matters. The bye-elections in England had been going rather against the Government lately, and that had been attributed to the introduction of the Licensing Bill. When the results of the Scottish bye-elections were known and they were favourable to the Government, the insinuation from the other side of the House was that they were successful because there was no Licensing Bill for Scotland. But the right hon. Member for Dundee and the hon. Members for Montrose and Kincardineshire in the elections they had fought had all advocated the principle of local option. He ventured to hope that the Government would take up the question of a Licensing Bill for Scotland, and he was certain if they did that the people of Scotland would rally to their support. It was said that this Bill was a kind of slur on the present licensing authorities of Scotland. He made no attack on the licensing authorities, but those who thought they knew best what was in the interests of temperance, the temperance societies, said that however good the licensing authority might be the only way to obtain good temperance legislation was to place the whole matter in the hands of the people so far as the licensing was concerned. Again, some people said that the people were not trusted in this matter. They were to be trusted so far as reduction and prohibition were concerned, but they were not to be trusted to have the option of saying that they should have licensed premises if they required them in prohibition areas. If it was agreed, that people requiring licences in prohibition areas should have the right to have them, would hon. Members opposing this Bill support local option? That was a question to which he would like to have an answer. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs was a great advocate of disinterested management, others went in for municipalisation, and others, again, advocated higher licence fees. There were various remedies proposed, but so far as the great temperance societies of Scotland were concerned, they one and all said that the one thing that ought to be tried in this matter, and which had not been tried in this country but which had been tried with great success in America and our Colonies, was local option. They believed that what had met with such success in America and the Colonies should be tried and would meet with success in this country. The State of Maine had been referred to: it was rather a singular thing that in America up to July last year the State of Maine was the only prohibition state. At the end of July, however, Kansas and North Dakota adopted total prohibition, and since then no less than four other States had adopted that principle, so that at the present time there were no less than seven states which had adopted absolute prohibition; of the remainder—some forty-four States—there were only seven in which there was no sort or kind of local option granted to the people in regard to this matter. He was quite sure that this Bill was not going in advance of public opinion, and he was satisfied that it was desired by the Scottish people. Fifty-one out of seventy-two Scottish Members voted for a Bill on similar lines last year, including the late and the present Prime Minister, and only seven voted against. So far as Liberal Scotland was concerned, no man could hope to win a seat in this House who did not put local option in the forefront of his programme. The Scottish Members on the Liberal side of the House were as anxious now as they were last year that this Bill should obtain a Second Reading, and if it did, they hoped that it might be passed into law.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Cameron Corbett.*)

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) said he made no apology for intervening in this, a Scottish debate, because in so doing he was only following, but in the contrary direction, the example of the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading, in intervening in the debate on the Licensing Bill a few days ago. He hoped he would be able to play the same part in a contrary sense as that played by the hon. Member in that English debate. He was one of those who held that there should be no distinction between England, Scotland, and Wales in these matters; they all formed part of Great Britain, and what was in the interest of one member was in the interest of the whole; he therefore claimed the right to intervene in this debate. Furthermore, there was the dread that if this Bill was carried into law it might later be extended to England, and with that in his mind he hoped he would be able to show good reason why the House should refuse it a Second Reading. The hon. Member who seconded the Motion for Second Reading told the House that he was not a teetotaler, but had always been an advocate of local option, the principle of this Bill. He also said that the temperance societies thought they knew what was best in the interest of temperance; if that were so, it naturally followed that the leaders of temperance societies knew what was best for temperance. Would the right hon. Gentleman be prepared to leave the question as to whether he should have a cellar in England or in Scotland to the decision of the hon. Member who moved the Motion and the hon. Members for the Spen Valley and Appleby Divisions who were eminent leaders of the temperance movement? He saw no extreme desire to answer that question. The hon. Member dealt with the State of Maine; he also would deal with that question, and believed that he would be able to show that the right hon. Gentleman was mistaken in the conclusion at which he had arrived with regard to the prohibition law in that country. Speaking for himself, and he believed for the friends who sat around him, he thoroughly recognised the evils of drunkenness. He did not think there was a man in the House who recognised those evils more than himself and who was more desirous of putting an end to them. The only question was how that object was to be achieved. It was a recognised fact that great evils arose from over-eating, but he never yet heard it suggested that people should not be allowed to eat anything at all, because some over-ate themselves, and it was not reasonable to suggest that people should not be allowed to take what in their case was only a harmless stimulant because some people could not control their desire and appetite for strong drink. There was nothing in this Bill to prove that if it passed money would not be spent in drink that ought to be spent on clothes and other things. The essential difference between himself and his friends and the right hon. Gentleman opposite was that they did not think any Act of Parliament could compel people into sobriety or any other good habit. They believed that much could be done by precept and example, and that much had been done in that way in the last twenty years, but they believed it was impossible by the policeman and the law to dragoon the people into becoming teetotalers or moderate in their drinking habits. The hon. Member who moved the Second Reading said that at the last election only three Members for Scotland gave their votes against this Bill.

Mr. CAMERON CORBETT said that he explained that there were only five residential constituencies where the majority voted against the policy of the Bill, that there were sixty-one Members out of seventy who were pledged in favour of the Bill.

Sir F. BANBURY said he was afraid there were a great number of Members on both sides of the House who, when on the platform, were prepared to pledge themselves to anything; they did not always carry out their pledges. There was a striking instance of that with regard to the sugar duty, where an hon. Member opposite said that his pledge to his constituency must be taken only as a sign of his sympathy. Was that the object of hon. Members? Was their desire to show signs of sympathy with the diminution of drunkenness? If so, he was only too desirous of giving similar pledges. With regard to the diminution of drunkenness in Scotland, since early closing and closing on special days had been in force the convictions in Glasgow had increased from 13,406 in 1904 to 22,025 in 1907. That was a very startling increase. His hon. friend attributed that to the fact that the policemen were not allowed to accompany the prisoners to the Police Courts. He was astonished to hear of the way in which these prosecutions in Scotland were conducted in the absence of the prosecutor. How did they arrive at the conviction? The policeman, the man who saw the prisoner drunk, was not there. The only conclusion they could arrive at under the circumstances was that when a policeman had nothing to do he arrested people for drunkenness, and when he had he did not. In Edinburgh the same thing occurred, the increase from 1904 to 1907 was from 11,930 to 14,791 cases. He said just now that he did not believe that people could be made sober by Act of Parliament. He was glad to see that at least one Scotsman agreed with him on that, and that was the late Sir James Annan, former representative of East Aberdeen in this House, who said that the Local Veto Bill of 1895—

> "Represented in concrete form the very idea which I believe to have been in this and other similar measures the chief reason of the defeat; I mean the Association which has arisen in men's minds between the Liberal Party and heroic attempts to reform the world by means of the policeman and the factory inspector."

The right hon. Gentleman opposite had stated that the recent bye-elections in England had gone rather against the Government — he himself would have said they had gone very much against the Government — but that the elections of Scotland had not. The reason for that was not far to seek—they had no Licensing Bill in Scotland. In addition to that, the people in Scotland were very conservative, but he had no doubt that in five years time the majorities there would be very largely reduced. Coming to the experience of other countries, he held in his hand a little book, issued by order of the Foreign Office in April, 1907, entitled "Diplomatic and Consular Reports, from Consuls of the United States, America, Liquor Traffic Legislation of the United States, America." If the right hon. Gentleman turned to page 29 he would see what they said about Maine. The Maine prohibition law was passed in 1851, and had been more or less amended and altered every year since. That was not a good beginning. The constitutional prohibition amendment was passed in 1884, but Mr. Vice-Consul Keating stated that for two or three years previous to 1895 the sheriff had recognised the case of restricted saloons, where the sale of liquor was well-known to take place. The sheriff, who was a teetotaler, had recognised his inability to stop the liquor traffic, and had adopted this course as the least evil. That was winking at a breach of the law.

Mr. CAMERON CORBETT said the hon. Baronet had read extracts with reference to prohibition, which was not the policy of this Bill. Would he now read what the Report said as to local option, which was the policy of the Bill?

Sir F. BANBURY said he understood that the Bill allowed localities certain choices, one of which was the total prohibition of public-houses, and it was that with which he was dealing. The title of the Bill was "A Bill to empower electors in Scotland to prohibit or limit the sale of intoxicating liquors in their respective areas."

Mr. CAMERON CORBETT: That Report does make certain statements against State prohibition. It also makes statements in favour of local option. [Cries of "Order."]

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. Member has stated his case. He may surely hear the other side.

Sir F. BANBURY made further quotations from the Report, one of which was to the effect that seventeen States had had stringent prohibition, but that it was only retained now by three, and that even in those it could not be looked upon as a success. Parts of the prohibition States had always been in open rebellion against the law. Drinking had always been possible, and liquor procurable. So far as the Colonies were concerned, he would say nothing, because with regard to them he had no information. He noticed that the Bill did not profess to deal with clubs, and he was very much afraid that the only result of its becoming law would be a great increase in the number of clubs in Scotland. He was sorry that the Member for the Spen Valley Division was not present. To write to the newspapers was a very dangerous thing to do. His experience was that one wrote something which one immediately regretted, because it was sure to be brought up against one. What said the hon. Member for the Spen Valley Division in the *National Review*, in 1907?—

> "It will be useless," he said, "to reduce the number of public-houses if at the same time the clubs, which are frequently little or nothing more than unlicensed public-houses, are allowed to spring up in all directions. That is so obvious that it is unnecessary to dwell upon it."

He did not propose to dwell upon it, but he agreed with the hon. Member for the Spen Valley Division. His point was that people like hon. Gentlemen opposite could have their liquor in their own houses, but at the same time they would vote for the prohibition of public-houses for the poorer classes, and take away what were practically their clubs. He considered that this was against that sense of justice which both Englishmen and Scotsmen had inherited from their forefathers. He did not believe that when it was understood what this Bill was really going to do hon. Gentlemen opposite would be so successful in the elections in Scotland as to which up to the present moment they were so extremely proud. The argument had been used in previous debates, that supposing the Bill was adopted in one district and not in another there would be dry and wet districts, and that those people who wished to drink would be forced to go some distance to the other district in order to get what they wanted. When a man went some distance and took some trouble to get drink, he would possibly take all he could carry before leaving the house. Therefore, unless they were certain that this Bill was going to be adopted all over Scotland, there would be an increase of open drinking, at any rate in those parts of Scotland where prohibition had not been voted, and only a decrease of open drinking in districts where it had been voted. The Minority Report of the Peel Commission said—

> "It is a mistake to suppose that any certain argument can be founded upon the experience of other countries, even if it were possible accurately to gauge the truth among such a cloud of contradictory statements. In sparsely inhabited districts local prohibition could probably be enforced without much difficulty, but in towns, even where a strong public opinion existed, violation of the law might take place with injurious consequences."

MR. LEIF JONES (Westmoreland, Appleby): They recommended it.

SIR F. BANBURY said he would not call it recommending to say "that a violation of the law might take place with injurious consequences." He could not quite tell what the recommendation did mean, though he was prepared to agree that a violation of the law would take place. Some very excellent remarks had been made by the Member for Huddersfield speaking on the 2nd December last at the National Liberal Club, an institution where there was not prohibition as far as he knew. [AN HON. MEMBER: What about the Carlton?] They did not pretend at the Carlton to be prohibitionists. This was what the hon. Member for Huddersfield said—

> "I would suggest that licensing proposals must not be directed to the outlawing of the traffic. The traffic in alcoholic liquors may be evil in the estimation of some; but it is a legal traffic, and its legality is based upon the fact that public opinion as a whole refuses to brand the consumption of alcoholic liquors as wrong. If the consumption of alcoholic liquors be not wrong, then the sale of those liquors must be justifiable. To attempt an arbitrary distinction between sale and consumption is as foolish as it is misleading. The point of view which would outlaw the traffic, and therefore drive it into the least worthy hands, is a point of view which, in my judgment, would imperil and not advance the moral progress of the community. It is true that I am here opposing a view widely current in the advanced temperance party, and a view, moreover, that has determined to a large extent the licensing legislation of the United States of America, but a close study of the laws and experience of that great country has convinced me that the attempt to degrade and outlaw the liquor traffic there has aggravated the evils that are associated with the trade, and has not secured the ends sincerely aimed at by the promoters of that legislation. So long as drink is sold it should be sold under decent conditions and the sale should be in the hands of the most worthy, rather than the least worthy, members of the community."

He had not the pleasure of the hon. Member's acquaintance, but he would like to make it. After that very excellent speech of the hon. Gentleman, he really did not see how anyone could get up and advocate the Second Reading of the Bill. He would like to say one word on the question of compensation. Admitting for the sake of argument that the Bill were carried and would do everything that was expected, what was going to happen? It seemed very hard that in those districts where prohibition was carried the people who had licensed houses and had been carrying on a legal business should be deprived of their livelihood at one fell swoop. Was it right, even to do public good—and he would admit for the sake of argument that it would, though he did not believe that any good would result—that they should take away from people their means of livelihood and their property? He maintained that if the House wanted prohibition, and thought it right and necessary in the interests of the nation, then they should compensate those people who had gone into a business sanctioned by the nation, and in which they had, under certain legal supervision, endeavoured to earn an honest livelihood. It was news to him that they should be philanthropic at the expense of other people. If his hon. friend desired to go down to history as a great philanthropist in the cause of teetotalism he should put his hand into his own pocket, and compensate these people who had been allowed by law in Scotland to engage in a business which had hitherto been considered a legal business. He would agree with his hon. friend if he would do that, because though he did not think that he would achieve his object, at any rate he would show that he was honest in his intentions and would do no harm to anybody. He mentioned that because he viewed with alarm the spread in that House of a desire to be philanthropic and charitable at other people's expense. He believed that all that sort of thing which was done for the good of humanity should be done at the expense of all, and not at the expense of a single class. He would refer for a few moments to one or two clauses of the Bill. By Clause 1 the Bill proposed that a bare majority should be sufficient. Hitherto the proposal had been a three-fourths majority, or as in the Bill of last year, three-fifths. They all knew perfectly well what took place at many elections, that a number of people did not take the trouble to vote, either because they thought their side was safe, or because they had business to attend to, or something of that sort. It was quite possible, therefore, that they might get in favour of prohibition a bare majority not of all the voters but only of those voting, and with that bare majority they were going to take away the livelihood of those people who were only, after all, engaged in an honest trade. There was a most improper provision in the Bill, that if the prohibitory Resolution was not carried the votes recorded in favour of such a resolution were to be added to those recorded in favour of the limiting resolution. Why? What reason was there why these votes should be added to anything at all? Why should the hon. Member pick out certain votes and add them to the limiting resolution? Every man should be given a fair chance of voting in favour of what he approved, and if he voted against prohibition his hon. friend had no business to take his vote and add it to somebody else's vote in favour of something else. He had never heard of such a thing. Next they would be having this principle introduced into Parliamentary elections. If there were a Liberal, a Labour, and a Conservative candidate, and the Conservative was not above the other two together, then, according to the proposal of this Bill, the Labour and Liberal votes would be added together and the Liberal would be declared elected. He thought he had shown that the Bill was impossible, and that the precedents from America were against this sort of legislation, while no argument had been advanced proving that it would be productive of any good result. All that would happen was that clubs would increase in number, and that there would be an increase of secret drinking. The hon. Member attributed the decreased consumption to Sunday closing. He himself put it down to the increased habits of sobriety of the people of all classes in the last thirty years. It had arisen in the higher class, and had extended to the others. That was the reason why the total consumption of liquor had diminished, and not because there had been any particular legislation as to Sunday or any other closing. He believed they could do a great deal by example, and if the people were only left alone they would in a few years become as temperate as the people in any State in which local option or prohibition was enforced. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

*MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor), in seconding the Amendment, said he did so, firstly, because he could not see that they were justified in placing in the hands of a bare majority a power to dictate to a minority either what they should drink or eat, or how they should go to bed, or whether they should wear nightcaps; and, secondly, because there was absolutely no evidence that this kind of repressive legislation had ever led to any satisfactory results in reducing the amount of drunkenness in this or any other country. They had only to compare the conditions of England and Scotland to see, at any rate, that this evidence was lacking. In England they had, of course, less drastic treatment of the liquor question than existed in Scotland, and they all knew that the reduction in the amount of drunkenness in England was most satisfactory. Measured from any point of view, either by the consumption of liquor, by the produce of the liquor duties and excise, or by convictions, or in any other way, the improvement in the drinking habit in England was most marked. In Scotland where legislation was more repressive they found not only that drunkenness had not decreased in the same way as it had elsewhere, but that it had increased, and, furthermore, the increase appeared to bear some kind of ratio to the repression that was put upon the people. In Scotland they had had Sunday closing for more than half a century. From 1904 onwards they had had earlier closing, the hour being altered from eleven to ten o'clock. They had restricted the sale of drink on public holidays, and the proportion of licensed houses to the population was 25 per cent. less than in England. Had the results got from that state of things been satisfactory? In 1897 there were 25,000 convictions for offences in connection with drunkenness, and since then the trend had been steadily upwards, but more markedly so since the earlier closing of 1904. As a matter of fact, the convictions were for 1897, 25,000; for 1902, 29,000; 1903, 25,000; 1904, 31,000; 1905, 33,000; and 1906, 40,000; and the hon. Member who moved the Second Reading of the Bill had pointed out that the alterations of the police regulations in Glasgow were only made in that year. They had the fact that the convictions in Scotland had steadily increased up to the year 1906. If they took the convictions per 1,000 people, they found an increase in these ten years from 5·8 to 8·4, or 40 per cent. If they looked at crime connected with drink, they found very much the same tale—the number of apprehensions and citations increased by some 40 per cent. The official volume of Criminal Statistics for 1907 stated that prosecutions and imprisonments were both largely in excess of the English figures in proportion to the population. It went on to point out that the imprisonments in Scotland were more than double as many per 1,000 of population as in England, and with regard to local opinion on the subject, he would quote a few words from the *Scotsman* of 2nd January, which said—

> "While in regard to other crimes Scotland grows no worse, in regard to crimes connected with drink there is a grievous backsliding. In the face of all these restrictions of drinking and inducements to moderation there is no improvement, but actual retrogression."

Some Members might not care to accept the authority of the *Scotsman* as being very important, but the hon. Member for the Spen Valley Division said in the article which had already been referred to, speaking of the conditions of repression—

> "These important conditions are in force in Scotland and intemperance and all the evils of the drinking system abound there."

It was true that the hon. Member went on to allege that matters would have been worse without these restrictions, but after all that was merely a matter of opinion, and they had his own admission that the position of Scotland was far from satisfactory. They found that in three years there had been an increase in the sale of whisky, and a decrease in the sale of beer. The increase was 300,000 gallons and the decrease 200,000 barrels. This was not entirely a satisfactory change which had taken place since they had earlier closing. But was not the explanation reasonable that it was brought about because the time was reduced in which they could drink beer in licensed premises, and people were, therefore, encouraged to carry away whisky in their pockets because they could not carry beer so conveniently? The hon. Member who seconded the Second Reading had pointed out that the number of prohibition States in America had increased from one to seven, but he had not told the House that seventeen States had previously tried prohibition and abandoned it as useless, and more harmful than tending to good. The experience of America, therefore, could not be looked upon as favourable to this repressive legislation. In Canada they found very much the same experience. In 1878 the Scott Act was passed which had practically very much the effect they were proposing to apply to Scotland now, and the result had been a declared failure by the substitution of an unlicensed and unregulated for a licensed and regulated trade.

> "The demand for drink remained the same but it was supplied in an illicit way."

These were the words used by Professor Goldwin Smith. Although the Scott Act had been passed by the people for genuine reasons—for the promotion of temperance—at an early date the people themselves were more and more tending to go back to the former state of things. In 1887 it was in force at sixty-two places, within ten years after the introduction of the Act. In 1892, only five years later, it was in operation in only thirty places. He had the authority of one hon. Member below the gangway for the view which he took in this matter of the experience of foreign countries. The hon. Member for Blackburn, in an article in the April number of the *Social Review*, admitted quite frankly that neither in New Zealand, Canada, nor in the United States had the policy of repression lessened the total consumption of drink. During the last ten years in Canada many districts had passed under local prohibition, but there had been in the same time a considerable increase in the consumption of liquor per head of the population. In New Zealand since prohibition had been adopted the convictions for drunkenness had risen, and though many of the United States had "no licence" areas, the drink bill of the States rose year by year. Then passing from that evidence closer home and comparing for a moment and in one respect the condition of France with that of England—France, where practically licences could be had for the asking, and where hours were unlimited—they found that the charges of drunkenness in Paris were almost absurdly small compared with what they were in this country. Of course, he was willing to admit the different tendencies of the two races, but the fact remained that in Paris, where there was very considerable freedom, they had something like 200 charges in a year as against fifty odd thousand in London. As regarded other objections it was unfair that the majority of any community should have it in their power to regulate the mode of life of the minority. This majority would probably include all those people who from taste or temperament did not take alcoholic drink, that it would include a great number of people who, like Members of that House, could get whatever they required to drink in their own houses, and it would include a considerable number of people of various classes who objected to the vicinity of a public-house, and they were going to put it in the power of these people, none of whom would suffer themselves by this legislation, to tyrannise over the lower classes in the district and to make it impossible for them, who could only get get their drink in small quantities day by day, to get the drink they required, and to live in a state of subjection and repression. This measure would impose upon the poorer classes inconvenience and tyranny, and it was an insult to their intelligence and powers of self-control which was quite intolerable. This Bill was not justified from the point of view of fairness, or by the evidence produced in support of similar legislation elsewhere. There was no evidence to show that the system proposed had had beneficial results, and he ventured to think that what was much more needed in Scotland than repressive legislation was an attempt to make the conditions under which drink was taken more respectable and elevating, and to raise the manhood of the people so as to be able to resist the temptations of their own inclination. They should try to do that by treating them as men and not remove all the manhood out of their nature by treating them as children.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said his hon. friend had referred to the repressive system under which they lived in Scotland. He supposed the hon. Member would call Sunday closing part of that system. His own view was that if they had not Sunday closing in Scotland the drunkenness statistics would go up very considerably, and no one in Scotland would venture now to advocate Sunday opening. A great deal of the increase in the number of cases of drunkenness in Scotland was limited to the tramp class. Another reason was that the law was being more vigorously enforced by the police, and public opinion would not tolerate drunken people in the street. That had had a good deal to do with the increase in the number of cases of drunkenness in Scotland. The earlier closing of public-houses would be considered repressive legislation, but it had done a good deal to diminish drunkenness, and more might be done along those lines. In one public-house in West Fife they closed at nine o'clock, which was an hour earlier, but the proprietor had to re-open again and go back to ten o'clock closing, because his customers went to another house two or three miles away, with the result that the men were later than ever in getting home. If they had had nine o'clock closing at both these places that could not have happened. He was confident that earlier closing in Scotland would have a salutary effect upon the number of convictions for drunkenness. On the general question he hoped they might have from the Government some lead, some indication of the lines which licensing reform in Scotland should take in view of the need for further legislation and the proposals for England. Public opinion would support stiffer legislation than was found in the Licensing Bill for England, an admirable Bill, opposition to which, he believed, was rapidly growing weaker. For Scotland local option was an essential part of licensing reform, but by itself it would bring about administrative confusion. There should be a time-limit, not so long as that contained in the English Bill, because licences could be bought at five years purchase. The position of the Scottish licensing authorities, strong in many respects, was weak in that they had only the alternatives of continuing the licence or of destroying the market value to the owner; they had not the free hand they would have after a time-limit. The system of disinterested management, he was glad to know, was making considerable progress, judging from his experience in West Fife. At any rate, the management had been so far satisfactory that the system had been regarded with increasing favour by public opinion and the magistrates, as was shown by the number of licences they had granted. If they had a time-limit for Scotland and a free hand for legislation afterwards, coupled with local option, they would be in a thoroughly satisfactory position, but local option, he maintained, could not be taken alone to the exclusion of other essential securities. He would give his reasons for the inexpediency of adopting a local option policy by itself without other legislation. One of them was the necessity for enforcing proper regulations in regard to structural alterations in premises. One of the most useful things the licensing authorities did now was in relation to structural alterations, and the licensing bench would in that matter inevitably be weakened by local option without other securities. He attached very great importance to that point. The Kirkcaldy bench of magistrates had before them recently the case of a public-house in a narrow street where premises were worth, he thought, under £500, though the licence in the market had been bought and sold for £4,000 or £5,000. The magistrates at once insisted on structural alterations. They often gave advice before a licence came up for renewal at next Court that structural alterations ought to be carried out.

That had led to an extraordinary improvement.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): Does the hon. Member not see the great difficulty with regard to structural alterations being ordered by the magistrates if a time-limit were enforced?

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON said he did not think that under the provisions of the English Bill there would be any difficulty in enforcing structural alterations, though the magistrates would not have so free a hand. It depended on the time-limit, but he thought the difficulty could be got over. Under local option standing alone they could not enforce structural alterations. Nor would they be able to do so in the case of new licences. He did not understand the point of view of the licensed trade. The company to which he had referred did not treat a licence as a permanent asset; they were free to give it up at any time. When a licensed house was bought in the open market they wrote it off after a certain number of years so that they might be prepared to lose it if the magistrates considered that it was not required in the public interest. The practical difficulties which had to be faced in dealing with licences had not been altogether met by the promoters of this Bill, and that was why he ventured to put them before the House. One of the reasons which had made him so keen for temperance reform was the influence of the trade upon elections, both local and imperial. Did anyone suppose that the conflict with the liquor trade at elections was likely to be lessened by local option? It would bring out the evils arising from the action of the trade to a far greater extent than anything they had yet experienced. He was not sure what the effect of the conflict might be in the part of the country where he lived; he did not know that it would be in the interest of temperance. They had seen the effect of the trade influence at recent elections, and if local option were adopted there would be an opportunity for exercising similar methods once a year, and he must say that he did not look forward to that contingency with any great equanimity. The result of passing a Local Veto Bill would be to diminish the sense of administrative responsibility resting on the magistrates. He admitted that at present a great many licensing bodies were weak. A strong licensing authority was the best security they could have in the interests of temperance. If public-houses were closed, he believed there would be considerable risk of clubs taking a stronger hold in Scotland than they had now. The provisions in the English Bill in regard to clubs were the weak point. If they once admitted the principle of the time-limit, and, still more, if after the expiry of the time-limit they had a free hand to secure the elimination of the undesirable houses in the retail trade, the way would be perfectly clear for the enforcement of prohibition. The true solution of the licensing difficulty in Scotland was not touched by this Bill. The question was grappled with by the English Bill. He could not support the Bill now before the House if it was presented as a sufficient alternative in Scotland for the policy embodied in the main lines of the English Bill. He strongly urged that Scotland should not be given half measures instead of strong measures for dealing with the requirements of the country in the matter of licensing. The people of Scotland had had too much experience of that. Parliament should deal with the problem in Scotland in the same thorough and adequate manner as in England. He trusted that the Government would approach the question in the same spirit in both countries.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said that when a Bill containing such stringent provisions was introduced at this late period of the session, with no chance of its passing into law, it was apparent that the debate must be more or less of an academic character. In speaking of the measure he had no desire to use words which would embitter the controversy at all. While he deplored some of the methods of hon. Gentlemen opposite, he entirely recognised their sincerity in bringing forward this measure. His hon. friend the Member for the City of London had used the oft-repeated phrase: You cannot make men sober by Act of Parliament.

The truth or falsity of that dogma depended on the meaning attached to the words. On the one hand, it might imply the idea that by restricting opportunities they could gradually cultivate in the community acquiescence in total abstention from alcohol. That was the principle on which the Bill proceeded. It might mean, on the other hand, that something could be done by legislation to make those who did use alcohol temperate in the use of it. He thought there was more truth in the latter than in the former proposition. This question could be looked at from the physical, ethical, moral, or political side. He did not pretend to be able to speak on the physical side of the question at all; he certainly would not "rush in where angels fear to tread." Doctors differed as to the physiological effect of alcohol. Some held that alcohol was poison, while other approved of a little wine for the stomach's sake, but all were agreed that excess was prejudicial. As to the ethical side of the question, he held that it was precisely from the ethical point of view that the proposals in this Bill failed, because they were attempts, and he thought very crude attempts, at coercion. The areas over which the Bill was spread were wide areas; it was obviously the desire of the promoters to close as many public-houses in those areas as could be closed with the approval of the people who lived there. He agreed that there were many things in the present state of the licensing laws which would bear alteration. There was a good deal to be said for the view that there were too many public-houses. They made laws which would remove children from the influence of the public-house. He agreed that it was quite right for children to have a chance in life and not to be prejudiced by their environment. But the case was different in regard to adults, and to attempt to legislate for them in the way proposed by the Bill was, in his opinion, to do a great disservice to the cause of temperance. Under the present system they compelled a man to go into a public-house for reasonable refreshment, and invited him to remain there, so that they were really in effect putting a premium on continual indulgence. They made it a condition that a man should only remain in a public-house so long as he was pouring alcohol down his throat. A great mistake was made in not providing coffee and tea in public-houses. He maintained that it would be far better for the cause of temperance if they allowed, of course under regulation and proper control, music and harmless games. At all events, they should give a man a chance to prefer hearing "Iolanthe" or engaging in a game of draughts, when he met his friends in the public-house, rather than make it a sole condition to stand at the bar and pour spirits down his throat. He had felt it incumbent upon him to say that, and he hoped he had not said it in any spirit of severe controversy. He admitted that the policy he advocated would not be agreeable to those who accepted the proposition that all alcohol was poison, and that to take it was a moral sin. There was no arguing with those who took up that position; but he would remind them that after the return recently given to the House, the argument in favour of temperance drinks must go by the board, and he would also remind hon. Gentlemen opposite that in Denmark light beers were considered in the category of temperance drinks. Of course, the objection would be urged that any scheme which would make the public-house more respectable and attractive and a place to which men might resort in the evening, would all be for the benefit of the publican. He admitted that there was a great deal to be said for that view, and also that the State made a great mistake in allowing the sale of liquor to pass into private hands. But the right having been granted to private persons to sell liquor, he pointed out that in this Bill they could not find one word about compensation to the man who lost his licence. He agreed with the hon. Member for Huddersfield, who pointed out last year in a very powerful speech when this Bill was under consideration that they would never get the people of this country to accept any proposal for temperance reform which did not include some provision for compensation. That was a principle the acceptance of which was not confined to one side of politics. He remembered that it was an accepted principle by Liberals in the old days.

Mr. John Bright, speaking at Birmingham on the Permissive Bill on 29th August, 1883, said—

> "There was no valuation provided for, there was no compensation offered or suggested, and the plan was one of what you would call real and honest reform, and the publicans and licensed victuallers, wherever you got a majority, were to be exterminated as if they had been vermin. I do not think a policy of this kind will be held to be statesmanlike or just."

It was said that the State was only resuming a valuable concession with which it ought never to have parted. If they took that view, it seemed a little illogical to say in the next breath that a licence was worth no more than a scrap of paper, and that the publican only got it for one year. He wished to go deeper into the question. In order to correct this error committed by the State in the past, were private individuals to suffer in the present, or to be expropriated without compensation or some attempt to give a fair and reasonable value for that of which they were to be deprived? If they accepted that principle why stop at liquor vending? He came across the other day a paper devoted to setting forth the views of hon. Members below the gangway—the *New Age*—and it contained the following instructive comment in regard to the Licensing Bill:—

> "Is not the legal monopoly in land precisely similar to the legal monopoly in the sale of drink? Why not a time-limit—say, a twenty-eight years' time-limit for land, so that at the end of a generation the State might resume the most valuable of all monopolies which was ever granted to private individuals?"

Did the right hon. Gentleman, the Secretary for Scotland, say so; did the Government say so? Of course not. The real truth of the matter was that any proposals for temperance reform must be of a far wider and practical shape than those contained in the Bill. Let him say in passing that he presumed the hon. Member for the Tradeston Division and other hon. Members who held strong views on prohibition, only valued the restrictions in the Bill as a step on the road to the extinction of the trade in alcohol altogether. But he would point out that their great pioneer in the House, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, dissented from that proposition in the debate on the Local Veto Bill in 1895. Sir Wilfrid then said—

> "Reverting to the option and restriction clauses, it must be understood that they had not been demanded by the prohibitionists; they had been demanded by a few Members, a few newspaper editors, and a few philosophers who sat up in attics and knew nothing about it."

Prohibition raised two questions; in the first place, the power of any party to enforce prohibition; and in the second place, which was far wider, the moral right of a majority, if they had it, to enforce it on the minority. As to the power, they had had remarks about the success or non-success of prohibition in different parts of the world, and especially in Canada and the United States. On a previous occasion he had addressed some observations to the House in regard to New Zealand. On this occasion he would say one word as to Canada. His hon. friend the Member for the Tradeston Division had declared that in no place in which local option had been adopted had it ever been receded from. He took leave to point out that that statement was not entirely according to fact. They began to try it in the province of Ontario in 1876, but really it was first put in operation under the Scott Act in 1884, when three-fourths of the counties in the Province adopted it. What happened? Every single one of them on the first opportunity given to them in 1888 gave up prohibition and reverted to licence. Other communities adopted the Scott Act in 1885, and re-considered it in 1889, when again everyone of them gave up prohibition and reverted to license. These facts must have escaped his hon. friend's memory. He believed that in Ontario some other system of local option was adopted in 1906, but even that was not entirely satisfactory. He would take convictions for drunkenness. He did not want to quarrel too much with these statistics, although he did not think that they were a very practical working test. But in Ontario in the five years previous to 1885 when the licence system prevailed the convictions for drunkenness per thousand of the population were 2·79. In the five years ending 1890, under prohibition, the convictions rose to 3·10; in the three years subsequent when licence again prevailed the convictions fell to

1·98. If they went further back the figures were even more striking. In the first period of licence—1876–1883, the annual average convictions for drunkenness was 3,848; in the second prohibition period, 1884–1889, the average annual convictions were 4,222; in the next period 1890–1898, when licences were reverted to, the average annual convictions were 2,602; and in the last period, 1899–1906, they revived local option the average annual convictions were 3,052. Further, he would take the figures for the four years, 1903–1906, in two of which local option was revived, to shew the striking increase in the figures. In 1903 the committals for drunkenness were 2,987, in 1904 they were 3,590. But see how they jumped up with prohibition revived. In 1905 the committals for drunkenness were 4,157, in 1906 they were 4,216, or an increase of 41 per cent. in four years. He frankly admitted that these figures were not an infallible test, but he thought they were a very good answer to the hon. Member for the Tradeston Division. He would not say very much on the moral side of the question, as to how far a majority had a right to coerce the minority. He could imagine anyone advocating or upholding liberty not merely on its negative but on its positive side; but he would point out that repressive measures whether in regard to liquor or tariff had always failed to achieve their object. Government, with the assistance of ecclesiastical institutions, tried to make all men believe alike, and they failed. The English Government, with the assistance of soldiery, tried to dictate to the Highlanders how they should dress, and they failed. And when they came to dictate to a minority almost equal in number to the majority as to what their tastes and habits were to be, experience showed that they could only enforce it with the greatest possible difficulty, if at all. He would commend to hon. Members opposite what was said by one of the greatest men America ever produced, the man who did more than any other man in the world for the abolition of slavery in the United States. He meant John Quincy Adams, who addressing the Norfolk Temperance Society on local veto, said—

"Forget not I pray you the rights of personal freedom. Self-government is the foundation of all our political and social institutions. Seek not to enforce upon your brother by legislative enactments the virtue that he can possess only by the dictates of his own conscience, and the energy of his will."

Sir J. DEWAR (Inverness) said he desired to offer only a few observations as to why he objected to this Bill. He stood there elected as an opponent of local veto; he might say that he was elected in spite of being an opponent of local veto. He gave the promoters of the Bill credit for being actuated by the highest motives. Everybody acknowledged that they desired to bring about an improvement in the social condition of the people. But he asked whether they were going about it in the way most likely to carry out their object? While the great majority of the people of Scotland were in favour of local control of the liquor traffic, he did not believe that the majority were in favour of the Bill now before the House. His belief was that if they knew what the effect of this Bill would be not 10 per cent. of the people would support it—that was to say if they knew the hardships which the measure would produce if carried into law. They all desired that public opinion should prevail in this as in other matters. It was pre-supposed that public opinion did not prevail at present, under the Scottish licensing system. That was a mistake; the existing licensing authorities in Scotland were elected entirely by the people in the district, and the voice of the people prevailed. The licensing authority in the towns consisted of the magistrates and some portion of the town council, and there was no person in Scotland so susceptible of public opinion as the Scottish bailie. In the county licensing court there were a certain number of representatives elected by the people. In connection with another Bill before the House they opposed entrusting certain powers in regard to small holdings to the county councils because they were not elected for that purpose. It might also be said that the licensing authorities in the counties were not elected solely for licensing; but there could be no doubt that in regard to either small holdings or licensing, the opinion of the people would be expressed through their elected representatives on the county council or town council. He would further say that the intention of the Bill was, in his view, not to give expression to the will of the people as fully as they ought to do, but to suppress public houses by a method not now available. The present licensing authority had ample powers to do that now. All the promoters of this Bill desired to do was to take those powers from the licensing authority and put them in the hands of a certain number of people. It was quite possible under this Bill for a small minority of the inhabitants of a district—10 per cent.—to control the rest for three years. The principle might be good or bad, but it was an entirely novel one to adopt for either Scotland or this country. Public-houses existed to satisfy the demand of the public; they were not entirely frequented by habitual drunkards. The majority of people used alcohol moderately, not only in this but in every other Christian country, and it was a gross outrage to say that the public-houses of the country existed entirely to supply an unlawful demand. He held that the Bill as at present framed would not effect any improvement of social conditions in Scotland, but might in many cases result in undoubted hardship. The hon. Member for Leith Burghs had drawn attention to one or two points which might be emphasised by the present difficulty the licensing benches had through not being able to compensate men for the unjust refusal of their licence. He himself had known a bench of licensing magistrates composed entirely of extreme teetotalers, who had no desire to drink themselves or give other people an opportunity of so doing. They did not grant new licences, but they gave fair compensation according to the necessities of the case for any hardship that might arise from the suppression of the licences. He also mentioned that if the Bill passed that might be the result. He had known cases where licensing magistrates had insisted on great and expensive alterations being made in public-houses. After that had been done was it fair that a majority of the people should have the power to have such a house shut up, and its customers dispersed to other houses in the neighbourhood. If a case of that kind was put to them he did not believe the majority of the people would close the house. But having all that in view and having regard to the fact that the intemperate use of alcohol led to terrible evils in this country, he thought this country would be justified in making any experiment to remedy those evils. Nevertheless, he did not think any country would be justified in making such experiments at the will of a few individuals. Injustice should not be done to any individual even for the benefit of the community at large unless it was done by way of a Government Bill with the full responsibility that attached to such a measure. Therefore, taking a broad view of the circumstances, and having regard to all the interests involved, he had come to the conclusion that he must vote against this Bill.

*MR. FINDLAY (Lanarkshire, N.E.) said they were all agreed that this was a very complex question which they had to deal with in connection with the public sale of intoxicants. It was a thing so terrible that they desired to see the welfare of the country provided for in the best way. For many years past there had been Bills and Resolutions in regard to this matter. In approaching the subject they should bear in mind the fact that this was a Bill relating to Scotland alone. Reference had been made to various parts of the world, but in regard to Scotland they were more or less agreed that public opinion was ripe for such a measure. Having been a total abstainer all his life he might have a certain bias on the question, but he could quite see that something more was needed to give expression to public opinion as to what people required in a particular locality. Instead of having the streets of the towns crowded with public-houses, which were centres of temptation, they ought to allow a Bill of this kind to be passed in order to give the people an opportunity of expressing their opinion. The sale of intoxicants required drastic treatment; he had never been able to understand how a Christian Legislature could legalise the public sale of what everyone regarded as an evil. When they took into consideration the physical, mental, and moral deterioration which followed from this, the least they could do was to give the people of a locality an opportunity to express their opinion, which was what this Bill did. Many licensing authorities took care that no licences should be granted near a public school, because of the sights and sounds that flowed from public-houses, and the desirability of not allowing the minds of the young students being offended by those sights and sounds. So far as the liberty of the subject was concerned, it was recognised that in such things as infectious diseases or anything affecting the well-being of a district drastic measures should be taken at once for the public weal. That being so, in a case of this kind, and keeping in view the fact that public opinion in Scotland was ripe, the people should certainly have the opportunity of expressing their opinion, which this Bill gave them. They could make it easier for a man to do right, and more difficult for him to do wrong, and that was the power they wanted to give to the localities. He had known localities where hotels existed which were doing so large a Sunday trade that they were becoming a nuisance to the locality, and the people felt it so strongly that they made a pronounced expression to the Court, which listened to that expression, a thing that was not always done, with the result that the seven-day licences were removed, to the very great benefit of the locality. He felt that this was a question which the great majority of the Scottish Members were ready to support, and which he hoped a large majority of the House would be prepared to vote for. In regard to Canada, he had occasion some time ago to be in Toronto, and while there he was much struck with what was told him in regard to how the authorities there had been taking drastic measures in refusing licences. No house could have a licence unless it had so much bedroom accommodation; every house closed at seven on Saturday night, and could not open till Monday morning. He was pointed out a big corner building which was refused its licence, and was now a savings bank. That was the kind of thing they wanted. In regard to the liberty of the subject, he was much puzzled as to how they could see a man going home drunk, having a boy with him, whose prospects were thus ruined, physically and otherwise, and not interfere. Therefore they desired to give the people a right to say whether they should have these temptations in their midst or not, and he thought the Bill was a fair and reasonable proposal.

*SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said that the speech of the hon. Member recalled to his mind some words used by Dr. Chalmers before a Parliamentary Committee. He was asked: "Can you not do something to make a bad man better?" "Possibly we may," said he, "but a harder thing is to make a weak man strong," and that was what they had got to think of more than they did at the present day. He noticed that in the opening of that debate there was a great deal said which had been said on other questions about the tremendous preponderance of Scottish feeling on behalf of this Bill. They were constantly told that really any opinion contrary to that of the Liberal Members did not count in Scotland, and that Scotland was unanimous in their favour, and they were persuaded that on that unanimity they could go to any extreme. He rejoiced that another opinion was given by the hon. Baronet opposite, one whom they all so well respected, and whose boldness in uttering his opinions in spite of the risk of criticism he was certain had added to the respect in which they held him in every part of the House. There was no man who would be less moved by personal interests than the hon. Baronet, who spoke, he was certain, with absolute indifference to personal interests. He spoke what was the deliberate and well-considered truth. They were told that every Member, except that negligible quantity, the Conservative Members for the Universities, who he presumed were speaking for more or less educated constituencies—these gibes were given in perfect good nature, and he was sure would be treated with as much indifference and placidity of mind as he himself was ready to give them—but they were told that this question of local option prevailed everywhere, was dominant at every election, that it carried with it conviction to every Scottish heart, and that Scotland was more than ripe. He was not quite so sure. He thought there were varieties, if he might say so without imputing any want of sincerity, in the amount of ardency in the adherence of various hon. Members on the other side to this question of local option. It was mixed up with other questions, and the fact was that a political question grew very much from accident. A few people whom their friends called prophets and their opponents called faddists and fanatics took up a question. Others thought it contrary to common sense and did not think it necessary to reiterate what they thought was dictated by common sense, and they allowed them to have the most of the speaking and to press their views in season and out of season. Their case was helped by that very reiteration and urgency, and they began to persuade that most delicate organism, the nerves of a party candidate, that they really represented the feeling of the constituency, whereas the feeling of the majority of the constituency was probably absolutely indifferent or refused to treat the question as serious. Another thing that helped it was that it got hold of a very taking name. They used to hear in old days the term "a permissive Bill." That had now gone the way of all earthly things and was forgotten, but it was attractive, as a learned Judge in Scotland put it, by its name, because it asked "Permit me to prevent you from having a glass of beer." Was local option a proper name? Was it not rather a Bill to take away from the inhabitants of a particular locality the option of having alcoholic liquors if they pleased? There was a great deal in a name, and he thought this name had considerably helped the faddists, or, to be more complimentary, the enthusiastic supporters who had pressed it to the fore. The hon. Member who brought forward the Bill spent a great deal of time in combating the arguments put forward in a certain paper which he had received from some trade organisation. In discussing these matters he (Sir H. Craik) absolutely refused to look at the representations of any trade society whatever, and he was not speaking in their interests, but it did not seem to him that the arguments which the hon. Member quoted were the strongest that might be used. The main argument by which he tried to press the Bill was that the unanimous opinion of the Scottish Liberal Members was for it, and that therefore the others should suppress their dislike. He also referred to his own experience as a landlord, and to that of other landlords, in doing what? In taking away local option, in preventing, by the power of the proprietor, the wish of the inhabitants prevailing, even if they desired to have a public-house. He had no doubt that it must be very satisfactory to live under the benevolent despotism of the hon. Member, but if he was going to give them local option, had it not better be fair all round? Were they not going to have local option against the proprietor if his views happened to disagree with those of the inhabitants? This Bill did not give that power. It said that they might close existing public-houses, but if the proprietor had prevented any public-house no majority, and not even unanimity, on the part of the inhabitants of the district would be able to set up a public-house against his will. If they were going to call their plan by the name of local option, they had better have it fairly administered to all. The hon. Member said he trusted to the majorities. On what ground were majorities to refuse them? Was it because they disliked the existence of a public-house in the neighbourhood? He disliked it himself. He was sorry to say that if he were to act simply from selfish motives he was afraid he would be found from those selfish motives, and against his sense of duty, strongly inclined to vote against the opening of a public-house. But he did not think that was exactly the highest view that he ought to take. He would dislike a public-house being opened next door to his own place; they all disliked it. If he were the inhabitant of a quiet little country village unbeset by trippers, he would dislike the opening of a hotel in that village, but he hoped that he would have such a fair fellow-feeling for his fellow-citizens as to be willing that the advantages and the amenities of that locality should be open to them, and he thought he would be acting the dog in the manger to refuse to allow a hotel to be opened which might be the only way by which the dwellers in towns would be able to get away for a few hours and enjoy the place. The majority would be enlarged by a considerable element of pure selfishness, by those who wished to keep others away from their neighbourhood. Were they entitled by law, because any use of certain premises was disagreeable, to prevent the opening of premises for that use? It was disagreeable to them all if a factory was opened close to them, and if what was a quiet, easy-going residential neighbourhood was invaded by shops, but was the whole of the locality to be allowed to vote on the question and to tell the manufacturer that he must close his factory because it was contrary to their opinions and that they would rather keep their green fields and gardens? They were compelled to submit themselves as inhabitants of a locality to the just rights of a majority, and if for the requirements of a locality a public-house or a factory was called for, they were compelled to submit to it. They were not to band together a few active men to make a little clique and to banish things they did not like in the locality because they did not happen to like them. What was the other ground they could have? Was it because they wished to stop disorder and illegality? Would they stop disorder and the crimes produced by drink by driving drink into obscure corners? They had far better have it in licensed premises where they had the supervision of the police, and where they could have constant visits to the place, and where, at all events, what crime was done was done under the eye of the law, and was checked by the law. If it was merely disorder they wanted to stop, then let them tell their magistrates and justices and the people in Scotland that crime was not lessened but increased if a man made a brute of himself by drink. Let them punish the drunkards and the men who committed crime through drink; until both parties in that House visited the crime and degradation of drunkenness with punishment, their fancied restrictions of liberty and their local option Acts would count for nothing. Were they prepared in the face of the nation to say that any trade in alcohol was an infection and a contagion like disease to be checked out as criminal in every circumstance? He dared say there were a few persons of strong opinions, as their friends would say, or fanatics as others would call them, who held that position, but would any responsible Government stand up and say that? Would any candidate for Parliamentary suffrages think he would be supported in that? Were they honest in fancying that any such thing actually existed, when Member after Member said he supported this Bill not because he was a teetotaler—and they all knew that it was a small proportion of that House who were teetotal, or, at all events, a still smaller proportion who would for a moment say that any dealing with alcohol was in itself a crime? If they could not support that view they had no right, for their own convenience, to place the liberty of the subject in that respect under restrictions which were contrary to the policy and constitution of this country as a free commonwealth. They had no right to impose their will upon others. What remained as their last resort as a defence for a policy like that? Simply the cowardly excuse that a large number of their fellow-subjects whom they were not ashamed to say they represented asked to be protected, to give up their own manhood and power of resistance, and to be protected against temptation to yield to a degrading vice. Hon. Members below the gangway sometimes spoke on behalf of their own constituencies in favour of such restrictions, but he did not think they were representing the real manliness and independence of the British working men. It was once said by an English bishop—

> "Anxious as all of us are to prevent the ills of drink, I would almost prefer to see England free to England sober."

That had been often repeated and often condemned, but he was not ashamed to say that he saw more than a germ of truth in it. If they were to purchase restrictions upon a contemptible minority of vicious and drunken people by sacrificing the liberty of their country and the freedom of their constitution, he was not prepared to pay the price, and that was what they were asked to do in that Bill. He was glad the Bill was more extreme, more absurd, and more foolish than its predecessors, because the sooner it was really understood by the electors to what restrictions the fanatical supporters of such measures were prepared to go, the sooner they would waken to the dangers before them, and the sooner they would intimate their judgment on such measures by a deliberate condemnation of what was nothing less than an attempt to undermine the national liberty.

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) said he desired to associate himself and his friends with the principle of the measure before the House. During the debate he had been puzzled to find what was the real objection of those who had spoken against the Bill. He had followed the whole of the speeches very carefully, and he thought he was right in saying that the criticisms offered had been criticisms of detail rather than objections to the principle of the measure. They had been told that they were interfering with liberty, and that a bare majority was not sufficient, but it seemed to him that that question was one that could be decided upon in Committee. If hon. Members who had spoken against the principle of the bare majority were prepared to join those who supported the Bill in a real attempt to make the Bill more effective, he ventured to say it would be most likely their objections would receive most careful consideration. The last speaker had endeavoured to make out a case against the Bill, but in his speech he gave the strongest possible argument in favour of its principle. He boldly told the House that he himself would object to a public-house being put down next to his own house.

Sir HENRY CRAIK: I said distinctly I would dislike it, but that I should not feel myself entitled to object to it.

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON said it seemed to him that the hon. Baronet disliked the placing of a public-house next to the house where he resided, and that was the strongest reason why he and his friends on those benches were prepared to support the principle of the measure. The working classes disliked to have public-houses dumped down, in spite of any protest that they had made, next door to where they resided. It seemed to him that there could be no sounder principle in temperance legislation than the principle that the people who were directly affected by licences should be consulted regarded the placing of those licences in their several localities. They must recognise the magnitude of the evil with which the Bill proposed to deal. He was delighted to hear the hon. Baronet the Member for Inverness-shire go so far as to say that he himself would be prepared to try almost any experiment if after successful experiment the evils arising from the immoderate use of liquor might be minimised. It seemed strange that with the admitted evils they had so many speakers who objected to every measure which attempted to minimise those evils. They on those benches were prepared at any rate to go the length of experimenting with the principle known as local option. They had a very direct mandate. The hon. Baronet had questioned whether they spoke for those whom they represented. At their annual conference two years ago they had a recommendation carried unanimously in favour of the principle of the Bill, and three years ago, at their annual conference, a division was challenged, and the principle of the measure received 600,000 votes to a little over 100,000 the other way. Surely that was receiving in a very definite sense a mandate in favour of the principle. Why were they so insistent upon that principle? First, because in their opinion nobody could understand better than the people themselves what their necessities were, so far as facilities for the supply of liquor were concerned. Secondly, the question of liquor licences so vitally affected the inhabitants of every locality that they ought to have the fullest control over the issue and the renewal of licences. These licences ought to be strictly regulated in accordance with their needs and desires. In the third place, it had always been admitted that the liquor traffic according to law existed for the sake of the people, and surely, if that was so, it ought to be under the direct control of the people. Another reason why they supported the principle was that they were strongly convinced that this question would never be settled until it was settled by an appeal to the democratic instincts of the people themselves. On that point they could bring before the House in support of the proposition not only evidence from leading statesmen who had represented the party now in power, but even from those who were prominently associated with the party above the gangway. The Member for West Birmingham made a famous declaration on this point that he would bring to the notice of the House. He said—

> "I do not wonder that good and earnest men should despair, in the presence of the persistent continuance of the evil, of being able to find any successful remedy; but when statesmen have only made the matter worse, when Parliament has legislated to no purpose, I am still sanguine that the people themselves, if wholly trusted, would do something to mitigate the plague and to stay its ravages."

It seemed to him that there was no better way of trusting the people than by taking them into their confidence and asking how far they were prepared to have licences or to restrict them. The late Sir W. Harcourt declared that this principle

> "rests on a broad, solid, and democratic basis. We say that if there ever was a question on which the will of the people ought to be pronounced and ought to prevail, it is this question which so deeply affects their social and material and moral advantages."

One speaker in the debate had quoted the hon. members for Spen Valley and Huddersfield and had endeavoured to make out that they were both against the principle of this Bill, but he ventured to say that any attempt to do that was a perversion of the position that both of those hon. Members took up. The hon. Member for Huddersfield had declared over and over again in favour of the principle of the veto. The position he took up, and the position of the hon. Member for Spen Valley, was that where, by the vote of the people, they declared against licences, then a certain policy should be acted upon in regard to those licences, a policy which had not, he was prepared to admit, the solid support of other leaders of the temperance movement. The Member for Spen Valley, on this very principle, said—

> "If the people are given the power of direct local veto they will use it, and when used it is the most effective remedy for intemperance that has yet been devised."

In seeking to set up that principle they were encouraged to do so from the magnificent results that had already been obtained by trusting the people in other directions. Reference had been made to the great improvement that had taken place in the social life of people during the last twenty or thirty years. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London closed his speech with a reference to that particular point. There had been no more powerful factor in producing that improvement than that to be found in the growing desire on the part of the Legislature to appeal directly to the democratic instincts of the people. It was because they had trusted the people in matters of local government that there was more interest in local government to-day than ever before. So he was led to the conclusion that if they could but trust the people with these questions which so vitally affected their whole life, if the employing classes would look more seriously into the economic aspect of this great problem, they would recognise that they ought to join with those who represented more directly the organised workers of the country, in their own interests as employers, to do all they possibly could to give the people the power of reducing the altogether too numerous facilities that existed in connection with the sale of liquor. An attempt had been made to minimise the useful effects in other countries where this principle had been put into operation. He thought it must be admitted that wherever the principle of this Bill had been put in operation, in America or in any of our Colonies, there had been no serious attempt made to upset the principle and revert to the old order of things. In this country the principle of the veto had been put into operation, but in a rather different form. The hon. Member who introduced the Bill had reminded them how a landlord put the principle into operation. There were hon. Members in that House who owned acres upon acres with not a single public-house on their estate. There were tens of thousands of acres with thousands of population on them, with not a single licensed house. Wherever this had been done at the will of the landlord there had been no serious difficulty about the deeds under which the property was sold, and no serious attempt had been made to upset the principle. The fact of the matter was that irrespective of whether the people wanted the principle put in operation or not, the landlords were wise in their day and generation. They knew perfectly well that the fewer public-houses they had upon their estates he more valuable was the property existing on them, and they were exceedingly anxious to protect their property from depreciation. He ventured to say that they could not take up a sounder stand than that of these landlords, namely, that of vetoing licences and so protecting their land and property. And they as workmen believed that there should be an equal right conferred on workmen, not only to protect their property, but to protect that which was dearer to them, namely, their wives and children, from the demoralising influences and associations of public-house life. There had been an immense improvement in social life during the last twenty or thirty years. In that period many workmen had accepted the advice given to them to practise thrift. It was astonishing how many missionaries there were who were always advocating this practice of thrift by workmen. He believed that many workmen had accepted the advice, and that through the instrumentality of building societies, savings banks, and co-operative societies there were in this country to-day thousands, if not tens of thousands, who owned their own little cottages. He knew from actual experience men who had invested their hard-earned savings in houses in a working-class district, but irrespective of their wishes in the matter some brewery company came along and secured—it was difficult to say how the licences were procured sometimes—the right to put in that working-class district a public-house, which introduced all the evils and associations of licensed premises, and the inevitable result was that the houses in which the working men had invested all their savings became depreciated in value. If they desired, as he thought they all did, to see a development of this higher social standard in the community, more especially among the working classes, they could not do better than say to these men: "We will trust you to guard your own interests and the interests of your fellow-men against the introduction of a licensed house into your district." It was because this was the very principle of the Bill that they were prepared to give it their whole-hearted and enthusiastic support. He was not committing his party to the whole of the details of the Bill. There were one or two things in it which they did not like, and one or two shortcomings which they disapproved, but to the main principle of the measure they gave their whole-hearted and enthusiastic support, and in Committee they would take their part in seeking to amend some of its shortcomings. He did not think he need apologise as an English Member for having intruded in this debate on a Scottish measure, but, in fact, if the Bill became law it was to be put in operation in his native land, and, being a Scotsman born, he thought that he was to some extent justified in intervening in the debate as the representative of an English constituency.

*MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire) said that a most deplorable part of the debate was that it had been made a party question by some hon. Members on the other side of the House, and he believed that they were really departing from their own sentiments on this subject in defence of their own political party. He thought that if one or two of the hon. Members who had spoken went back to their constituencies they would very likely find if an election took place—and he hoped that it was yet far distant—they had very seriously imperilled their seats. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London had made great play with the saying that they could not make a man sober by act of Parliament. That was perfectly true. He did not say for a moment that they could make a man who had been the *habitue* of public-houses for twenty years sober by act of Parliament. But he did think that the young and rising generation should be protected from having the atmosphere of the public-house all round their homes. He could speak from his own experience in the East, where we might learn a lesson in this matter. He could remember very well that at the time of the discussion on the opium question in India, he was visited over and over again by Bhuddist monks, who said to him: "You will never cure the opium drunkard, or the opium eater, or smoker by any amount of restrictions you may put upon the practice, but what you will do is this—you will save all the boys and girls who are now rising to manhood and to womanhood." And upon that principle they had acted, and from the last reports he had received it appeared that in that part of our Eastern Empire to which he was referring the rising generation had been, at least in some measure, protected against the opium curse. He thought the hon. Member for the Barnard Castle Division had completely demolished the statement made by an hon. Member on the other side of the House to the effect that the working classes were not in favour of this restrictive measure. He, at any rate, could speak for his constituency which consisted of something like 12,000 of the working classes. Some 8,000 or 9,000 of them were subjected day and night to severe and arduous toil, and to a man the miners of Stirlingshire—and the women too, he had been told—supported the Bill, and had urged him to defend it by voice and by vote and were not prepared to permit even one iota of the stringency of it to be relaxed. That was the opinion of a large section of hard-working men; and he, therefore, entirely repudiated the statement that the working men did not want the Bill. He was surprised to hear the hon. Member for the Glasgow University speak with contempt of the principle of local option, because he understood that in educational matters he was a very ardent advocate of it. Why should he oppose it in reference to a matter of infinitely more importance?

SIR HENRY CRAIK: I do not recognise my opinions as expressed by the hon. Member.

*MR. SMEATON said that when the hon. Member came to deal with what was admitted to be a most dangerous trade to the community—dangerous in every sense of the word, dangerous morally and dangerous physically—he appeared to repudiate the principle altogether.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: Will the hon. Member tell me what he means by local option in educational matters?

*MR. SMEATON said he thought he could with confidence leave the House to judge of that. It was a great pity the debate had been conducted in a party spirit; he should have thought there would have been a distinct disposition to unite in admitting the principle that the people had the right in a matter of this kind to judge for themselves. The hon. Member for the City of London had also tried to disparage the effects of restrictive legislation in other parts of the world, bringing in Canada, the United States, and several Colonies, but he had avoided Scotland. Hon. Members had circled round the world in search of arguments against local option, but they had not denied that the Scottish people had a right in their own towns and villages to say what remedy should be adopted. They had asked with a united voice for this measure, and he could not understand at all why they should bring in outsiders from every part of the world to try and defeat the measure. He thought the principle of the Bill ought to commend itself to them all. Perhaps the strongest argument in favour of it was that the rising generation would be removed by the exercise of local option from temptation and the atmosphere of the public-house. He admitted there were points in the Bill which demanded investigation before it was passed into law, but they were Committee points and did not concern the principle of the Bill. He thought, for instance, that the requisition of not less than one-tenth was a figure that perhaps ought to be corrected; and that a mere majority in favour of a prohibitive or limiting resolution was perhaps a little too drastic. It ought to be a substantial majority. Then he considered grocers' licences ought to be included. They were not specifically mentioned, but he presumed they would be included. He sincerely hoped, moreover, that among the electors defined in page 3, women would be included. It was the wives and daughters who suffered most from the indulgence in intemperance by their fathers and brothers. He hoped they would have a very strong voice in the matter. He heartily supported the Second Reading of the Bill.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) said he was very sorry to hear the observation of the hon. Gentleman opposite that the discussion had been conducted on party lines. Personally, he thought it was an extremely gratifying feature that the measure had been discussed in a very cool and amicable manner. It certainly had not followed on the party lines represented. It was not his intention to detain the House for more than a few minutes, but he did not think it was necessary that he should make any apology for intruding in the debate, because by the general consensus of opinion, opinions from all parts of the world were welcome on any subject which had anything to do with any part of His Majesty's dominions. Perhaps, he could make an additional claim to speak, because, when the measure last year passed its Second Reading, he was appointed on the Committee upstairs, with a view to discussing the Bill. It proved, however, to be only an academic discussion, because they were never called upon to put forward any opinions in Committee. If this Bill passed, it would be the seventh—and the second within the last six months—that had been read a second time. The promoters, however, had increased in severity, and they had brought forward a more drastic measure than they had discussed previously. Last year the Secretary for Scotland heartily endorsed the principle of the Bill, but he gave no sign as to whether it was proposed to be adopted or not by the Government. He had listened with great interest to the hon. Gentleman who spoke from below the gangway. He always enjoyed listening to his speeches. The hon. Member had told them that he had not heard any opposition to the principle of the Bill. He took it that the principle of the Bill was the diminution of drinking facilities. A large section of the people assumed that, if the principle of local option was adopted in Scotland, drinking facilities would be largely diminished, if not altogether removed. A great many of them on that side of the House, at any rate, did not believe that this system would in any sense satisfy the promoters, whilst it would create many anomalies and could not but be a failure. He intended to touch upon only one of the most important reasons for opposing the Bill. The measure was unnecessary, and he ventured to think that opinion was not unanimously in favour of it in Scotland. He was perfectly convinced that if there had been a decided public opinion at the back of the Bill it would have become law before now. It was because there was not that decided opinion behind it that it had not been passed into law, and he had no doubt that the Government had no intention of taking it up, though they might go so far as to extend their patronage to it. The reason he believed the Bill was unnecessary was that he thought the amending and consolidating Act passed in 1903 was sufficient. The hon. Member who seconded the Bill practically stated that the licensing laws of Scotland at the present moment were of a thoroughly representative and democratic character. They were far more representative and democratic than in England. They could all look with pleasure on the fact that there were a far smaller number of licences in the whole of Scotland per 1,000 of the population than in England; but the fact that there was more drunkenness showed that it did not depend upon the actual number of licences. A further reason for the condemnation of the measure was that it was an unequal form of legislation. It set up different forms of legislation over all the country, and it was obvious, if it became the law of the land, there must be anomalies, and increasing anomalies. Over and above all, however, the strongest reason for opposing the Bill was the injustice which it would create with regard to compensation. They could assume that they were all anxious to do their utmost to promote the cause of temperance. It had not been assumed on electioneering platforms, but it was a fact which he thought every Member would admit. Having agreed that their one aim and object was temperance, they then, however, parted company, because the views they held as to how it was to be effected were widely divergent. The point of view he held was that after a certain point it was impossible further to promote temperance by restrictive legislation. He was perfectly convinced that the advance of temperance beyond that point depended upon the system of education, upon the education of public opinion, and upon the endeavours of all classes of the community to raise the moral standard of the children as they grew up. So much for the question of temperance. With regard to the Bill it appeared to him that there were various dangers in it which had been entirely unforeseen by the promoters in their desire to bring forward what they believed to be a temperance measure. It was perfectly obvious that this measure did not veto the manufacture, or even the sale of intoxicating liquor. It only vetoed the consumption on licensed premises. There was a certain section of the community who would insist on obtaining the liquor they required, and he was perfectly convinced—and it was one of the reasons why he strongly opposed the measure—that the Bill would be bound to drive a certain section of the community to resort to those pernicious and thoroughly detestable habits of secret drinking, from which far more evil resulted than when it was possible to obtain liquor with reasonable facilities within well-conducted and police-supervised public-houses. The details of the Bill were of a very faulty character, and if it ever became the law of the land they would first be very drastically amended by a great many Members who had spoken in almost entire favour of the Bill. The chief defect in the machinery of the Bill was that by a bare majority prohibition was to be instituted in various areas of the country. The word "area" meant, in the case of a borough which was not divided into wards, the whole borough, and where it was divided, a ward. The ward was a very small district in which to take a poll for one section of the community to say whether they would have prohibition or not against the opinion of the other section of the community, which desired a limitation, or no change whatever. As the wards were in very close contiguity, it would be possible to have a public-house adjoining a ward where there was no public-house. The consequence would be that the desire for decreased facilities for drinking must be entirely neutralised. Then if a prohibitory resolution was enforced and, on a poll, was subsequently repealed, what was the discretion of the magistrates? Were they bound to grant new licences? Where did the will of the people come in and where did the discretion of the magistrate end? That was an ambiguity which should be cleared up. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had condemned the use of foreign examples, but where they were dealing with theory they must use examples from foreign countries. Generally statistics could be used to prove a case either way, but they had only to look to New Zealand to recognise that the consumption of beer and spirits had increased to a very large extent in the recent past, and that prosecutions and convictions for drunkenness had also increased. The most deplorable part of the system in New Zealand had been the large increase of secret drinking all over the country. They knew perfectly well in the case of secret drinking that it was the most difficult system for the police to discover. It forced on the police the employment of methods which they all must condemn and deplore, because it was contrary to the idea of every Englishman to have to resort to the system of espionage. If the measure in its present shape became law in Scotland it would be possible to evade it in a great many cases with the greatest ease, and he was one of those who believed that if a law was passed, evasion should be made almost impossible. The Bill was a flagrant instance of class legislation. It would be perfectly possible for a rich man to go on as he had done before, and have his cellar of wine and the liquor he wanted, but the ordinary individuals who were in a very large majority, who did not take too much, would be placed at a very great disadvantage. It would be possible for a bare majority in a particular locality to eliminate all the licensed premises and to give the owners of those premises no compensation whatever. That was an act of injustice which, he thought, the majority of the people of this country were not prepared to support. He should vote against the Bill.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I can assure the noble Lord who has just sat down that in Scotland this is no academic controversy. As one who has supported for many years various Bills embodying the principles of this measure, I have listened with great satisfaction to the discussion this afternoon. It is a long lane that has no turning. It may fairly be said as an encouragement to those who have worked and hoped for this reform for many years in Scotland that we are discussing the question to-day under more favourable auspices than we have done for many years past. I have great sympathy with those in Scotland who are somewhat envious of the prior position which the sister country has attained in regard to this question. As the hon. Gentleman who moved the Second Reading said, there is in Scotland a lively recognition of the economic waste and loss which the habits of the people inflict on the country, a lively sense of the disastrous effects of these habits and of the public burdens which they impose on the country. Scotland is ripe for an experiment of this kind. They are ripe for advance, and nobody in Scotland would go back to the days before the existing statutes were passed. The Bill before the House aims at the control and the reduction of licences. The Act passed in 1903 placed Scotland in regard to licensing machinery in a better position than England now occupies. The licensing authority in Scotland reflects more readily and truly public opinion on this question. In spite of that there is a feeling, which is general in Scotland, that the people have not full local control in this matter, and I believe if public opinion in Scotland had been free to move on its own initiative, this Bill undoubtedly represents one of the directions in which that public opinion would have moved. It is not necessary, in supporting the principle of local option, to argue that it is a remedy for all the evils we are seeking to remove; but that it would help to reduce those evils I think is undoubted, and especially in the case of Scotland. In many respects Scotland differs from England on this question. Take the density of population, for instance. In England the density is 550 to the square mile, while in Scotland it is only 150. If local option is to be tried at all, it should be tried in districts where there is a sparse population. Scotland offers a much more favourable field than England for an experiment of this kind. The Bill does not pretend to be a comprehensive scheme. It is not placed before Parliament as an alternative to any scheme so comprehensive as the Licensing Bill for England. Several defects in the Bill have been pointed out in the course of the debate. During the last few days I have received deputations in regard to the Bill, and the gentlemen who formed those deputations pointed out what they considered to be omissions and defects in the Bill. There is no provision in the Bill, for instance, for medicinal sale, and there are no provisions dealing with clubs. It is the case, I believe, that the provisions of the Act of 1903 with regard to clubs do not meet all the necessities of the case. In Scotland we are in a position more advantageous than that in England for dealing with clubs, but it is true that the provisions of the Act of 1903 require strengthening in certain particulars. During the last fifteen or sixteen years 150 or 160 licences have been reduced in the city of Glasgow, but, on the other hand, during the last four or five years the number of registered clubs has increased from sixteen to seventy-one. I do not make it a matter of complaint against the Bill, but in reviewing the debate I do not think we can ignore the question of clubs. For myself I am entirely in favour of granting to Scotland the powers of this Bill. But we have to consider whether there is already going on a sufficiently progressive reduction in the number of licences. What tests can we apply to answer the question? One is the principle of Lord Peel's suggestion. He wished to apply certain principles as a test in this matter to urban communities. If you apply his suggestion to the urban communities of Scotland as a whole you will find that his suggestion contemplates as necessary for Scotland a reduction of 1,500 licences, and the question now is to what extent this Bill would effect that. I wish the promoters had included in the Bill the machinery to carry out the reductions contemplated, so that we might be able to judge, because now that the English Bill has been introduced, that Bill must inevitably be contrasted as it has been with the provisions of this Bill. My hon. friend the Member for Leith Burghs expressed his opinion as a member of the licensing authority and a chief magistrate of a town in Scotland. His contention was that although reduction was desired there is still an obstacle to carrying out the reduction in practice. The inevitable question where the obstacle lies then arises. There is in the English Bill what I may describe as an equitable consideration offered to remove any obstacle which might be in the way of the English authorities, and inevitably now we must make up our minds in Scotland whether any equitable consideration is possible, whether such equitable consideration would be useful, and whether this or any other Bill dealing with the subject would be strengthened and made more efficacious if such provisions were added to it. Before that question could be answered, and I will not now attempt to answer it, one or two questions must be borne in mind. There are cardinal differences between England and Scotland. We are not on the same plane in Scotland. In the first place, broadly speaking, there are no tied houses. The licence is granted to the man who actually carries on the business, and it is a licence for one year and no longer. That has never been doubted in Scotland. Furthermore, the discretion of the licensing authority is absolute, and when the Inland Revenue come to value licensed premises in Scotland, they have done so on quite a different basis or with different results from those reached in England. I should like to quote to the House a passage from a speech made upon the English Bill of the late Government in 1904 in another place by Lord Balfour of Burleigh, who was for some time the Secretary for Scotland. He said—

> "Every licence-holder must be in one of four classes. He may be either a tenant with a lease, or a tenant without a lease, or he may be the owner and occupier, or the owner and not the occupier. The Inland Revenue authorities in Scotland have not given away the case so completely as I am afraid has been the case in England. When a man is a tenant with no lease it is very rarely that any revenue is got by the Inland Revenue. If there has been a sale to the incoming tenant, or if the late tenant has recently bought, there is an effort to get at what he paid, and something is taken, but generally the sale is conditional on the transfer of the licence being obtained. In the case where the man is a tenant under a lease, his interest stands somewhat higher; and in the strongest case of all, when a man is both owner and occupier, a duty is got, but it is only obtained upon a very small calculation of the enhanced value. I was looking through the state of the law last year and came across a recorded case in the Court of Session where there had been a contest between the Inland Revenue authorities and the owner of a licence as to the value of the goodwill. The case is that of the Lord Advocate on behalf of the Inland Revenue against the widow of a spirit merchant residing in Edinburgh. In that case the Inland Revenue claimed £3,000, or five times the annual value of the goodwill, which they put at £600. The owner of the licence contested both the number of years purchase and the value put upon the goodwill, and after consultation and the showing of figures an agreement was come to—it was not a decision by the Court but an agreement between the parties, ratified by the Court—fixing an annual value of £200 for the goodwill; but what was the gross sum paid? It was only £500, or two and a half years purchase. That shows at once that if anything in the nature of this Bill was to be applied to Scotland we should be in an infinitely worse position than we are in at the present time."

The value of licensed premises in Scotland is essential to the consideration of this question. I am sure of one thing, and that is that we are nearing the time in Scotland when the Government itself may hope to be able with some success to lay proposals before the House. At the present moment all the forces on which we can rely are engaged in the heavy task of promoting proposals on this subject for England and Wales.

The Bill before the House is not comprehensive, and it is, I think, fairly obvious that until the lines of the English Bill are finally settled the difficulty of determining the lines of a Scottish Bill will be greatly increased. The Government, however, give their cordial assent to the Second Reading of this Bill, and rejoice that it takes place under auspices so favourable for the future consideration of the question. If it is read a second time its future is automatically thrown on the Scottish Grand Committee, but it is not clear to the Government that any progress could be made with it this year before that Committee, seeing that there is already the Scottish Education Bill before it and that other Government Bills have been promised, which must take precedence of a private Member's. There is an alternative the Government prefer and that is to keep the Bill downstairs; and it will therefore be my duty if the opportunity arises to move that the Bill be committed to Committee of the Whole House. ["Hear, hear," "Oh, oh."] The House will still have control of the Bill, and it is not the wish of the Government to close the door against any further progress being made with it that time may show to be possible or desirable. The Government are nothing but friendly to the measure, and their action in proposing to refer it to Committee of the Whole House must not be taken as a sign of lack of heartiness in its support or as implying the view that such a Bill is not a proper subject for consideration by the Scottish Standing Committee. The Government are taking the course which in their opinion will best serve the interests of reform and avoid aggravating without due cause the difficulties of those engaged in furthering reform. Every help is needed just now to further a settlement of the licensing question for England, and I appeal with confidence to the supporters of the Government in the course I propose.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) said it was supererogation to continue the discussion after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. The Government had taken the course which most reasonable people thought they would take. They knew the right hon. Gentleman would bless the principle of the Bill, and they also knew that the English Bill, under which the Government proposed to appropriate the monopoly value of licences, would be taken as a precedent for doing the same thing in Scotland. He disagreed entirely with the principle of local option, because he believed it was a tyrannical interference with the rights and liberties of the people who had a perfect right to eat and drink what they pleased without being coerced as they would be under local veto. No question of this kind could possibly be settled by a private Bill and much less by a Bill drawn up on the lines now proposed. It was obvious that such a Bill drafted in its slipshod manner, was merely pabulum for teetotal platforms, and he was glad the Government had put an end to it by the course proposed. They had heard right hon. and hon. Gentlemen opposite profess the greatest desire to do only that which was fair and reasonable in dealing with the brewer, and they had also expressed the most determined intention to protect the licence holder. The right hon. Gentleman had told the House that there was no such thing in Scotland as the tied house system, as it prevailed in England. Brewers did not own houses in Scotland and neither did distillers; at all events, the system was so totally different that it might be taken that in almost every case the licence holder was the owner of his own business. If the intention of the Government and the Liberal Party was to be fair to the licence holder in England he hoped that would be borne in mind, and that he would be treated in a fair and generous manner. The position was a somewhat difficult one. There was no compensation levy in Scotland,

and for that very reason magistrates in Scotland had not been able to reduce licences, because of the hardship which the process would involve. He was glad that the right hon. Gentleman had taken up this position in regard to the Bill, because by referring it to a Committee of the Whole House he might just as well have told them that the Bill was not to proceed any further. Therefore, this measure had been killed by the right hon. Gentleman himself.

*MR. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs) said he had heard with interest the right hon. Gentleman's sympathetic speech and with deep disappointment the announcement of the decision of the Government with which that speech closed. The right hon. Gentleman began by praising Cæsar and then proceeded to bury him. So far as he could gather there was great enthusiasm in Scotland for temperance reform, and that was the question which created most interest. Of the petitions which had come in from Scotland most of them had been in favour of the English Licensing Bill. [A MEMBER of the OPPOSITION: Which does not apply to Scotland.] The people of Scotland had no selfish desire in seeking temperance reform, but they were anxious that the English people should be relieved of the suffering caused by the drink traffic. The strong feeling in Scotland in favour of the Bill now under discussion had been manifested by petitions, and there had been great hope of definite progress being made with it. He would be sorry to oppose a Government proposal, but unless they had a definite promise of a Government Bill next session, he would be constrained to vote against the Motion to refer the Bill to Committee of the Whole House. He appealed to the right hon. Gentleman to give them such an assurance.

MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars) said he wanted, on behalf of his colleagues in the Labour Party, to associate himself with what had just fallen from the hon. Member for Dumfries Burghs. He took considerable interest in this Bill and he had induced many of his colleagues to come down that day to back it. He had taken a deep interest in this Bill because he thought they meant business. He had listened attentively to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, which was extremely friendly until he reached the anti-climax when he intimated the decision of the Government. He regretted that decision, and unless they had some assurance that the Government would bring in a Bill next year he should certainly vote against referring it to a Committee of the Whole House, because if that course were taken they would not hear any more of the measure.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.) joined in the protest. The concluding remarks of the right hon. Gentleman implied a total breakdown of the system of Scottish Committees. He refused to go on wasting time over such measures as these year after year, and he emphatically protested against the proposal. The time they had taken over this Bill would be practically wasted if the course suggested were adopted. In spite of repeated majorities demanding temperance reform, during the last thirty years the Government were now giving another death knell to this question without any definite promise of reform next year. It was quite possible to send this Bill to the Scottish Standing Committee, which could put it into shape for reintroduction next year. This was a subject upon which Scottish Members felt very strongly. At election after election the question had been to the fore in Scotland. Those Liberals who had gone through ten years under a Conservative *regime* had been led to hope for better things under a Liberal Government. They had every right to protest in strong terms against their treatment at the hands of this so-called sympathetic Government. He would vote independently of party.

MR. AINSWORTH (Argyllshire) hoped the Bill would be allowed to go before the Scottish Standing Committee. The Committee were not so overloaded with business that they were unable to discuss the details of this measure and put it into shape. If time did not permit of the Bill being brought before the House on the Report stage, they would at least have got it into shape, and it would be in the power of the Government next session to introduce a measure dealing with the question. If they did not do that, the time already spent on the measure in this and previous sessions would be entirely wasted; by allowing the Bill to be sent to the Scottish Standing Committee the Government would show to their supporters that they were in earnest in this matter.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I do not wish to intervene in this debate except to say that it is a pity in view of the unanimity of opinion in Scotland in regard to licensing reform, or, as some hon. Gentlemen call it, temperance reform, the Government did not devote their attention to a Scottish Bill, in regard to which they would have had the support of the whole of the Scottish Members —[Cries of "No."]—well, the support of a preponderance of the Scottish Members. The Government might have been able to get a Scottish Bill passed through the House. I only heard the last part of the speech of the Secretary for Scotland, and I could not discover why he intimated his intention to propose that this Bill should be referred to a Committee of the Whole House. My hon. friends behind me are opposed to the Bill, and we shall support the Motion which the Secretary for Scotland is going to propose, because, in so doing, we conceive that we shall be taking the proper course, having regard to the fact that hon. Members from Scotland on this side of the House do not approve of the Bill. But does the House realise what it is that we are discussing? I am not talking now of the Bill itself, but of the Motion which the Secretary for Scotland has intimated his intention of moving. We have learned to-day what was one of the grounds for the creation of the Standing Committees, and it throws a flood of light on the popularity of these Committees. These Standing Committees which meet twice a week, which demand the attention of Members during the greater part of the day, and which send Members to the House ill-fitted for their duties, are, it seems, not meant to facilitate legislation, but to turn crude, ill-digested measures, unfit in the view of the Government to be made law, into something more presentable, in order that in another session the Government may have the opportunity of taking them up.

MR. PIRIE: That is all we can get in this House.

MR. WALTER LONG: We on this side are not responsible for the management of the business of the House, or for the way in which legislation is prepared. A new light has been thrown on the Standing Committee system, and it justifies us in the opposition which we offered at the time, and have offered ever since, to the proposals of the Government to cast this extra burden on Members of Parliament. Of course, the Scottish Standing Committee is one that stands by itself. It is composed almost entirely of Scottish Members. There are only a small number on it from other parts of the United Kingdom. I protest against the doctrine suggested by the speeches of some hon. Gentlemen opposite that Standing Committees should be used to turn ill-digested and ill-considered measures into such a shape that the Government may adopt them and Parliament be justified in passing them in another session. That is an altogether new doctrine and not in accordance with the purpose for which Standing Committees were constituted. If this Bill is not fit to pass, its supporters may just as well accept the inevitable and realise that it is dead, and that it is idle to discuss it as if it were intended to pass. What hon. Members opposite demand is that the Bill should be sent to the Scottish Standing Committee in order that it may be put in an entirely fresh form. I protest against that. It is not work the Committee should be called upon to perform. The Government to-day have given another proof of their inability to occupy the time of Parliament. While they are making futile endeavours to deal with the licensing question in England, they have disappointed their own followers from Scotland by not bringing in a Bill which might have dealt with some of the difficulties in Scotland.

*MR. McCALLUM (Paisley) hoped that the House would have a declaration from the Government that there would be temperance legislation for Scotland next session. This question was ripe for solution. While he was not prepared to vote against the Government and endanger the best one the country had had for the last seventy years he appealed to the Secretary for Scotland to give a definite promise with regard to next year.

MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) said he wanted to dissipate the idea that Scotland, broadly speaking, was in favour of this Bill. He did not know that there was any strong desire for such a Bill as this. It had been said that it was not a prohibition Bill, but prohibition was one of the parts of the measure which might be adopted. There might be piecemeal prohibition for Scotland under the Bill. Manifestly it was an extreme measure. There was not the slightest provision in it against the hardship of depriving a man, by a chance majority, of a business which he had conducted satisfactorily. He thought the figures quoted in the debate showed that extreme measures had not had the desired effect on the evils of drunkenness, but had rather aggravated them. For these reasons he wished to oppose the Bill as immature, ill-considered, and not of such a character as Scotland as a whole desired.

MR. SINCLAIR: If I may add one word by the courtesy of the House, I should like to respond to the appeal made to me by some hon. Gentlemen on this side. It is not possible, of course, for me on my own responsibility to promise any legislation on any subject for next session, but I may say that it will be my duty, and I will exercise it, to represent most strongly to my colleagues the strong feelings and desire on the part of Scottish Members for an advance on this question. My hon. friends have no doubt whatever of the sincerity of myself or the Government in this matter. They have no doubt whatever that in taking the action I now propose we are entirely friendly to licensing reform, and to the principle of the Bill. I, therefore, with confidence appeal to them to support us in carrying out a course which, after deep and careful consideration, we conceive to be that which is most likely to promote the interests they have at heart.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) said there was evidently bitter dissappointment on the part of the Scottish Members at the treatment which the Bill had received at the hands of the Government. The chief spokesman of the Government had blessed the Bill, and stated that temperance legislation was most urgently needed in Scotland, and had then delivered the death sentence on the Bill by intimating that he would move that it be referred to a Committee of the Whole House. Considering that Scotland returned, with few exceptions, representatives pledged to support the Government, and also that there was a far greater desire for licensing reform in Scotland than in England, it was a pity that the Government did not bring in a Scottish instead of an English Bill. He suggested that they should proceed with this Bill and drop the English Bill. Recent bye-elections had shown the strong opposition of English constituencies to this legislation, and he invited the opinion of the President of the Board of Trade whether he had not found that the desire for licensing reform was not nearly so strongly expressed at Manchester as at Dundee.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 189 ; Noes, 72. (Division List No. 101)

AYES.

Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Benn, W.(T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Bowerman, C. W.
Branch, James
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, RtHn SirJ.T(Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E.Grinst'd
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Delany, William
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W.H. (St.Pancras, N.
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Gulland, John W.
Harcourt, Rt Hn. L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, R.L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Hart-Davies, T.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William(Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lewis, John Herbert
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Macpherson, J. T.
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Molteno, Percy Alport
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, Capt. Hn A.C.(Kincard.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Grady, J.
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Philipps, J. Wynford (Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John-Norfolk, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rainy, A. Rolland
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Reddy, M.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, T.F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Scott, A.H. (Ashton under Lyne
Seddon, J.
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Smyth, Thomas F. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset)
Thorne, G. R.(Wolverhampton)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.

Lord Willoughby de Eresby.

Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whiteley, Rt, Hn. G. (York, W.R)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn(Carmarth'n)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Cameron Corbett and Mr. Eugene Wason.

NOES.

Anstruther-Gray, Major
Balcarres, Lord
Balfour, Rt Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Clancy, John Joseph
Clive, Percy Archer
Craig, Capt. James (Down, E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Dalrymple, Viscount
Devlin, Joseph
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Doughty, Sir George
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert(Lanark, Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Gooch, Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hogan, Michael
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kerry, Earl of
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Lockwood, Rt, Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col, Charles W. (Evesham)
Long, Rt, Hn, Walter (Dublin, S.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Killop, W.
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Mooney, J. J.
Nolan, Joseph
O'Brien, Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James(Wicklow, W.)
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Dowd, John
Pease, Herbert Pike(Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Rt, Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E.R.)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. James Mason.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Bill be committed to a Committee of the Whole House."—(*Mr. Sinclair.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 163; Noes, 85. (Division List No. 102).

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.
Agnew, George William
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Astbury, John Meir
Balfour, Rt Hn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Bowles, G. Stewart
Branch, James
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clancy, John Joseph
Clive, Percy Archer
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W.
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Craik, Sir Henry
Crean, Eugene
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N.
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Dobson, Thomas W.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Elibank, Master of
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fell, Arthur
Findlay, Alexander
Forster, Henry William
Fullerton, Hugh
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Glendinning, R. G.
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, Henry Cubitt(Peckham)
Grant, Corrie
Gretton, John
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Ro'send'le)
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hedges, A. Paget
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Hill, Sir Clement
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jackson, R. S.

Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jones, William(Carnarv'nshire)
Kerry, Earl of
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lever, A. Levy(Essex,Harwich)
Lewis, John Herbert
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long,Col.CharlesW.(Evesham)
Long,Rt.Hn.Walter(Dublin,S.)
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lupton, Arnold
M'Callum, John M.
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Micking, Major G.
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Molteno, Percy Alport
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morse, L. L.
Murray,Capt.Hn.A.C.(Kincard)
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Dowd, John
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Philipps, J.Wynford(Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Price,C.E.(Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Rainy, A. Rolland
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ.
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thompson,J.W.H.(Somerset,E.
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Wason,Rt.Hn.E(Clackmannan
Waterlow, D. S.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wiles, Thomas
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Younger, George
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Ainsworth, John Stirling
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Beaumont, Hon. Hubert
Bowerman, C. W.
Brunner,RtHnSirJ.T.(Cheshire
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Clough, William
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C.H.(Sussex,EGrinst'd
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Delany, William
Doughty, Sir George
Duncan, C.(Barrow-in-Furness)
Duncan,Robert (Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Ferens, T. R.
Gulland, John W.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose
Hardie, J.Keir(Merthyr Tydvil)
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazleton, Richard
Helmsley, Viscount
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Higham, John Sharp
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Houston, Robert Paterson
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hunt, Rowland
Jenkins, J.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Lehmann, R. C.
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Macpherson, J. T.
M'Crae, George
Maddison, Frederick
Meagher, Michael
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Reddy, M.
Redmond, William (Clare)
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Scott,A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seddon, J.
Smyth, ThomasF. (Leitrim, S.)
Snowden, P.
Steadman, W. C.
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Ward,John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley(York, E.R.)

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Cameron Corbett and Mr. Barnes.

Bill committed for Monday next.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at seven minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 25th May, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House, that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Metropolitan Police Provisional Order; Camborne Water; Southwell District Gas.

Also the Certificate that the Standing Orders have not been complied with in respect of the Petition for the following Bill: River Wandle Protection.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Knott End Railway Bill; Dartford Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Dundalk Urban District Council Bill.—Read 3^a, and passed.

Garw and Ogmore Gas Bill; London County Council (General Powers) Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners.

Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to.

St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments.

London and District Electricity Supply Bill [H.L.]; London Electric Supply Bill [H.L.]; London (Westminster and Kensington) Electric Supply Companies Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee adjourned this day at One o'clock; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Leith Burgh Bill [H.L.]; Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.]; Llanelly and Burry Port Water Board Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, that the Committee adjourned on Friday last at a quarter past Eleven o'clock; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Holderness Water Bill (Petition for additional Provision); River Wandle Protection (Petition for Bill).—Examiners' Certificates of non-compliance with the Standing Orders referred to the Standing Orders Committee on Monday next.

Motherwell Burgh Extension, etc., Bill.—Report from the Committee of Selection, that the Lord Saltoun be proposed to the House as a Member of the Select Committee on the said Bill in the place of the Earl of Westmeath; read, and agreed to.

Monmouthshire County Council Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, that it is not expedient to proceed further with the Bill; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Brought from the Commons, and read 1^a; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. (No. 77.)

PETITIONS.

LAND VALUES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition against; of the County Council of the County of Inverness; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

Petition in favour of; of British Ornithologists Union; read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Thirty-fifth Annual Report by the Accountant for Scotland to the Scottish Education Department.

CEYLON.

Correspondence relating to the consumption of opium in Ceylon.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act, 1903, during the month of June, 1907.

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

ARMY.

Regulations for the Special Reserve; Regulations for the Territorial Force.

ST. VINCENT.

Additional rules made for the government of the prison in St. Vincent.

GRENADA.

Prison rule abolishing the punishment of cutting the hair of female prisoners.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Order by the Secretary for Scotland, dated 15th May, 1908, providing for the early closing of a certain class of shops in the burgh of Govan.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF SOUTHAMPTON).

Order made by the council of the county of Southampton altering certain polling districts in the Basingstoke Parliamentary Division.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON ACT, 1898.

Amendment of Statutes 4, 26, 120, and 127 of the Statutes of the University of London, and of Statute 11 of the Statutes for the management of University College, London. Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and to be printed. (No. 75.)

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Message from the Commons, That they have ordered that the Committee appointed by them to join with the Committee of this House to consider the said Bill do meet the Lords' Committee in Committee Room A. on Wednesday next at Three o'clock, as proposed by their Lordships.

NEW BILL.

COMPANIES BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the law with respect to the holding of land by companies incorporated in British Possessions. Was presented by the Lord Hamilton of Dalzell; read 1^{a}; to be printed; and to be read 2^{a} on Monday next. (No. 76.)

THRIFT AND CREDIT BANKS BILL [H.L.].

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD WENLOCK: My Lords, in rising to move the Second Reading of this Bill I would ask the indulgence of your Lordships for a few minutes while I endeavour to explain its objects. The purpose of the measure is to give power to establish co-operative credit societies. This particular form of banking has been so successful in other countries that I am rather surprised that a measure of this kind should have been so long delayed in this country. It has also been found in other countries to afford the most excellent foundation for other forms of agricultural co-operation; and as we now hear so much about the necessity for agriculturists combining to protect their interests, I hope the Bill will commend itself to your Lordships as a good means of bringing about that result.

Such societies as exist in this country are not registered as friendly societies, but are specially authorised societies under the Friendly Societies Act. This has been found extremely inconvenient in practice, and it is sought by the Bill now before your Lordships to get over the difficulties by the establishment of these banks under their own Act of Parliament. What is sought for under this Bill on behalf of these societies is not sought for on behalf of those societies which are now registered under the Friendly Societies Act, and it does not in any way interfere with them. This Bill also takes power for the incorporation of these societies. This has been found to be not only extremely desirable, but absolutely necessary, because without it the societies cannot administer their own funds and cannot sue or be sued except through their trustees; and this is found to be extremely inconvenient in the working of credit societies.

Power is also taken in the Bill for establishing combination with central banks, a method of dealing with rural societies which has been adopted elsewhere, and has worked admirably. It is found that the abundance of one particular branch will supply the deficiencies of another, and the central authority can borrow in the open market, for it is recognised as a strong and well-managed institution. It can, therefore, do its business on thoroughly satisfactory lines. It is not sought in the Bill to ask the State to come forward with money, nor is any appeal made to philanthropists. It is intended that the whole matter should be dealt with on thoroughly sound business lines, and it is hoped that if such a Bill as this is passed the difficulties that have been encountered by societies in the past will be removed. Through the union with the central banks strict and uniform inspection can be carried out and audit properly maintained.

Another important part of the Bill is the provision by which it is sought to establish trading for the benefit of the various members of the societies, which is not possible under the present Act. In Germany rural credit societies have proved the foundation upon which the magnificent fabric of agricultural co-operative societies has been built up, and through them the humble folk in the rural parts of the country have been enormously benefited. They have been able to get their goods cheaper and on more reasonable terms, and experience has shown that prices generally for the members of these societies have been reduced by at least 10 per cent. Such societies, where established, have also been found to have an extremely valuable educational effect. Committees of management have taken care to exclude all bad characters, and I am told that in Italy, and even in Servia, where these societies are in existence, the moral character of the inhabitants has improved considerably. Men have in many cases taught themselves to write; they have given up their bad habits of drinking in order to obtain the benefits of these societies; and clergymen, magistrates, and judges have all testified to the extraordinary influence for good which these societies have had in the rural districts of the countries to which I have alluded.

Owing to the want of assured support it has been found difficult to start co-operative stores and credit societies, but where the two are started together it has been found that they can be run very easily, and there is no difficulty whatever in bringing them into existence. The Bill does not propose that the members of the societies should participate in any of the profits derived from the working of the various institutions, or that any payment should be made to officials. In point of fact, the whole system is to run these societies on the simplest and safest lines, and this is made possible by the measure which I have the honour of laying before your Lordships. In Germany and in India these organisations have been found extremely valuable; and as I have alluded to the fact that Raffeisen societies have been started in other countries I would like to lay before your Lordships a few figures to show the progress of this movement in different parts of the world.

In Germany there are no fewer than 22,000 societies under this system, all started since 1875, when the Government appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter. Fifteen thousand of them are rural credit societies, and they have 1,500,000 members, reserve funds amounting to £1,500,000, and savings deposits amounting to £56,000,000. Their turnover for last year was £140,000,000; but the figure is so large that I believe it must represent both sides of the account. In Cyprus twenty-two of these village banks had been started in 1907, in Finland 205 with 6,000 members, and in Hungary 1,956 with close upon 500,000 members. They had lent £3,000,000 out in loans in Hungary in 1906, and had £2,000,000 of savings deposits.

I now come to Ireland, where I believe the Bill will prove exceedingly valuable. There are now 273 credit societies, their creation being, as noble Lords are aware, almost entirely due to the energy of Sir Horace Plunkett. I have had an opportunity myself of seeing the good work that Sir Horace Plunkett has done in Ireland, as I once made a tour of inspection of the various creameries in the south and west of Ireland, and I was astonished to see the progress that had been made in this particular matter. Sir Horace Plunkett has put on record this statement—

> "If I could put the clock back twenty years and start the agricultural organisation movement in Ireland over again, I would begin with banks of the Raffeisen type in the poorest districts, believing that not only is this the most elevating form of co-operation, but that its adoption does more in teaching the principles of organised self-help than any other mode of introducing co-operation among agriculturists."

I have in my hand a memorandum from the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, in which they say that the draft of this Bill contains matter of great importance to the agricultural banks and credit societies working in Ireland. They go on to say—

> "With the objects of this Bill we are in entire agreement. The trading powers which the Bill would bestow on Irish agricultual banks is a matter which the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society has been agitating for several years, and the Bill, if it became law, would treble the usefulness of such societies in Ireland. The granting of trading powers to banks becomes year by year more urgent as the credit societies grow in number and take root in Ireland. At present they find their usefulness hampered by the restrictions imposed by the Friendly Societies Act, which was drafted originally without the slightest idea that any of its provisions would be extended to agricultural banks or credit societies. Rural credit societies are sufficiently important to demand an Act to themselves. At present a few crumbs of clauses of an Act devised for different purposes are thrown at them by the Treasury, and they are starved and rendered less efficient by the inadequate provision made for their extension."

Then they set forth the various reasons which have actuated them in arriving at this conclusion. I hope I have made it clear that, as far as Ireland is concerned, those who are entrusted with the work of extending agricultural combination and organisation in that country look to this Bill as a means of enabling their work to be doubled, and, possibly, trebled. Further, in Italy there are 1,461 Raffeisen banks, with savings deposits of £1,300,000, and loans have been made to members of £1,388,000.

I now come to India. When I first went to India, some seventeen years ago, the first thing that struck me was the extraordinary difficulty which the peasant cultivators had in obtaining credit or money to carry on their trade obligations; and I placed on special duty to inquire into this particular matter one of our most eminent officials, who had displayed great interest in the question. He visited all these various institutions on the Continent of Europe, and on his return published a valuable report, upon which the Government of India have acted. The result is that in India there has been an Act of this kind in force for three years. The record of the last year shows that there are now 744 societies in that country, with 55,000 members. The year before there were only 237 societies, with 20,970 members. They have lent out to members nearly 12 lakhs of rupees, they have $2\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs on deposit, and their reserve fund amounts to 39,000 rupees. I think this clearly shows that this movement has had most valuable results in India. I am told that in many instances the unfortunate ryots who had got into the hands of moneylenders considered that the debt would hang around their necks to the end of their lives, but by means of these societies they are able to pay off their indebtedness within a reasonable time, and hope is now taking the place of despair in their hearts.

The Bill as it now appears is the outcome of the most careful preparation and consideration brought to bear upon it by Mr. Wolff, the greatest authority in this country on this particular subject; and Sir Horace Plunkett has taken the greatest interest in it. Sir Horace Plunkett asked me if I would take charge of the Bill in your Lordships' House, and I need hardly say that, having such sympathy with its object, it has been a great pleasure to me to do so. I hope I have shown that this is a sound Bill, that it is drawn up on properly prepared lines, and that it is likely to bring about most valuable results if passed into law. I commend it with confidence to your Lordships' attention and I hope His Majesty's Government will be good enough to give it their most careful consideration.

I think His Majesty's Government will recognise that it is in some ways a thoroughly democratic Bill. It will enable humble folk in our rural districts to become themselves in time capitalists. It is brought in for the purpose of bringing to those who cannot obtain ordinary banking facilities the resources of capital, so that the small men may improve their position in life; and I hope that in time these societies will be extended through all the villages in the country. I do not see the noble Earl the President of the Board of Agriculture in his place, but I think it is already clear that the one thing which is going to prevent a large number of the applicants availing themselves of the benefits of the Small Holdings Act is that their capital is too small. I believe that under such a Bill as this these small agriculturists will be able to get the capital they so sadly need, and that in course of time the formation of these thrift and credit banks will be looked upon by agriculturists as one of the greatest boons ever sanctioned by Parliament for their benefit.

Moved, That the Bill be now read 2^{a}.—(*Lord Wenlock.*)

LORD LEITH OF FYVIE: My Lords, having taken considerable interest in co-operation, especially in its relation to agriculture, I have the greatest pleasure in associating myself with every word that the noble Lord has said in moving the Second Reading of this Bill. The matter could not have been put clearer, and there is only one thing to which I desire to call the attention of your Lordships. We are all more or less interested in agriculture, and we know how constant is the farmer's requirement of cash. In practice it is hard to get people to understand what co-operation is. This Bill puts into legal shape the possibility and also the probability of a general introduction of co-operative agricultural society banks, which will enable people engaged in farming to put their savings into these small banks to assist each other and in this way develop self-help, which is what co-operation is based upon. I feel sure that if this Bill meets with the approval of His Majesty's Government and becomes law, it will prove of the greatest possible benefit in the development of small holdings. As has been said by Lord Wenlock, something of this kind is of necessity in the case of small holdings, and the smaller the holding the more necessary it is that the capital should be in the plant. It is of the greatest benefit to these people to be able to use their money in assisting one another, and, when it is necessary to borrow, to be able to borrow at a rate much lower than the current rates. The current rates are based upon the Bank of England rate, and that is ruled by so many commercial reasons that it is unfair that it should influence and increase the rate to agriculturists. In Ireland during the last two years since agricultural banks have been established the rate has been one or two per cent. less than that of the ordinary banks. I think it of the greatest importance that the Bill should be read a second time and be approved of by His Majesty's Government.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, I cannot but think, after the clear statement with which my noble friend has moved the Second Reading of the Bill, that we can regard it as entirely non-controversial in character. We are all actuated with the desire to benefit agriculture as much as possible, and we recognise that the Bill must go far to extend that system of co-operative trading which is of such enormous advantage, especially to the small farmer. The principle involved in the Bill is by no means novel, and has worked extremely well in England and Wales on what is known as the voluntary system; but there is a strong feeling on the part of the chief promoters of the system of thrift and credit banks that their position would be strengthened by a Statute. The provisions in the second clause contain ample safeguards, and I particularly view with approbation the security for loans being used for work of a reproductive character. That is, to my mind, one of the principal points in the Bill, and one which must commend itself to His Majesty's Government.

I am particularly struck with the great advantage the Bill will be to small holders of landed property. As my noble friend Lord Wenlock said, this Bill may be truly described as a democratic measure; it will help the small men, while I do not see why it should not also help larger owners. I think the formation of these societies will be of enormous advantage to those men who, under the Act of last year, are acquiring small holdings. Indeed, I cannot but think that it is a natural and wise corollary to the Small Holdings Act passed by the House last year. My noble friend dealt fully and clearly with the great advantages that have accrued to

Ireland as a result of this system of co-operation, and in its application to Ireland the Bill will be on the lines of the great work done by Sir Horace Plunkett, than whom no man has done more to promote the agricultural welfare of Ireland. My noble friend stated to the House that through the efforts of Sir Horace Plunkett there were now in Ireland 270 of these credit societies.

Lord WENLOCK: 273.

The Marquess of LONDONDERRY: The loans in 1906 had reached nearly £50,000. The societies have a membership of 15,000, a capital of £40,000, and a reserve fund of £3,000; and taking into account all the societies of this nature which have been established under the guidance of Sir Horace Plunkett, the total is 925, with a membership of 90,000, a capital of between £500,000 and £600,000 and an annual turnover of £2,000,000. I think that speaks volumes for what Sir Horace Plunkett has done for the agricultural community. I would commend to the House the strong recommendation in favour of the Bill of the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society, who can speak with an authority second to none with regard to agriculture in Ireland. This society states that the granting of trading powers to banks becomes year by year more urgent as the credit societies grow in number.

At present these banks find their usefulness hampered by the restrictions imposed by the Friendly Societies Act, which, as the society points out, in the extract read by Lord Wenlock, was drafted originally without the slightest idea that any of its provisions would be extended to agricultural banks or credit societies. Under the present arrangement a credit bank has to be registered under the Friendly Societies Act, and a trading society under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act. The result is that in the agricultural districts where this movement is in operation there have to be two distinct organisations—one the bank and the other the trading society. Under this Bill there would be one society only, and that society on a sound and sufficiently secure basis. I do not think, after the clear explanation of the Bill that have been given, I need trespass at greater length upon your Lordships' time; but, in conclusion, I desire to repeat that I give the measure my most hearty support and I trust it will find its way to the Statute Book.

The Earl of SHAFTESBURY: My Lords, after what has been said I do not think it is really necessary to add anything further in support of this Bill. My experience in Ireland as a member of the Congested Districts Board, which has for some time supported these agricultural banks, has led me to desire for a long period some measure of this kind for agricultural districts in England, where it is needed for development of land or business. During the time that these agricultural banks have been in existence in Ireland the Congested Districts Board has often been approached with a view of granting loans to such banks, and in every instance in which we have done so we have found that the bank has been a great boon to the poor people who live in the congested parts of Ireland. In most instances the bank has proved to be sound and has enabled the trades or agricultural business of the locality to be carried on. I do not think that in any instance has a bank of this kind been proved to be a real failure. I, therefore, feel sure that if a measure of this kind were passed it would undoubtedly prove a great boon to all interested in agriculture in the poorest districts of England as well as Ireland. I, therefore, give the Bill my hearty support.

Lord REAY: My Lords, I wish to corroborate what has been said by my noble friend in charge of the Bill with regard to the great importance of these banks in India. Like him, when I was in India I made inquiries as to the possibility of starting agricultural banks, and obtained a very valuable report. Since then, as my noble friend has pointed out, these institutions have been introduced in India with very great success. I can also corroborate what has been said as to the great success of this movement in Germany and Italy, and I think that ought to induce us to follow their example, or, at all events, to remove the difficulties which now stand in the way of the formation of such banks. My noble friend has also alluded to the moral effect of these thrift banks, and the moral aspect ought certainly not to be overlooked. They also have an educational influence, for those who participate in them naturally take a greater interest in their agricultural pursuits. I trust that His Majesty's Government will allow the Bill to be read a second time, and I am quite sure that, if it is passed, agriculturists generally will feel very much indebted to my noble friend Lord Wenlock.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, this measure has received an almost complete degree of commendation from those who have spoken in this brief debate. Therefore, your Lordships, I am sure, will not be surprised to hear that we certainly do not propose to offer any objection to the Second Reading. But there is one point to which I think it is necessary to draw the attention of the House.

Every noble Lord who has spoken has regarded this as a purely agricultural question. I think we are all agreed that these agricultural credit banks are admirable institutions. They have been worked, as two noble Lords well acquainted with India have pointed out, with great success in that country. In several Continental countries they are also carried on on a very large scale, and equally with the most marked success. The noble Marquess opposite has spoken, and I can confirm everything he said on that point so far as my knowledge goes, of the success with which the principle of co-operation and the use of mutual credit has been introduced into Ireland. So far I think we are all in agreement. But the noble Lord has brought in this Bill as a general measure, and therefore it is important to consider what is its bearing upon the Friendly Societies Acts as a whole.

I do not propose to go into any detail on that point, but merely to remind the House that when the Bill goes into Committee there will be various points to be considered as to what the effect of this general amendment of the Friendly Societies Acts, because that is to what it amounts, may be on some of the great friendly societies. The Friendly Societies Act, as your Lordships are aware, provides that a society registered under that Act may, out of a separate loan fund to be formed by contributions or deposits of its members, make loans to its members under certain pretty close restrictions. For instance, a member shall not be entitled to hold an interest in the loan fund exceeding £200. Further than that, by a special authority granted by the Treasury under the Act in 1876 and amended, in the form in which it is now familiar, in 1903, the formation of credit societies was authorised pursuant to the Friendly Societies Act. This, of course, is outside the usual power of friendly societies, but still I believe a considerable number of credit societies have been formed, and have done useful work under this provision.

Then, again, the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893, provides for the registration and incorporation of societies for carrying on any industry, business, or trade, and under this Act there is a limit which provides that no member shall have any interest in the shares of the society exceeding £200. It may be perfectly true that for the purpose of agricultural banks it may be desirable to dispense with these limitations and restrictions, but it does not necessarily follow that it is desirable to do so in the case of all these other friendly societies, and that is a point which will have to be considered in Committee. Then there is the question of incorporation. Clause XI. provides that—

> "The following provision as to incorporation shall apply to societies registered or about to be registered under this Act:—
>
> (i) In lieu of a certificate of registry as hereinbefore provided, the chief registrar may, in case a society applies to be registered in pursuance of this Act as an incorporated body and if he deems it expedient so to do, give to the society a certificate of incorporation."

Well, all the great friendly societies are registered but not incorporated, and it will become a serious question whether other than for the purpose immediately contemplated by my noble friend it would be desirable to give the power of incorporation to friendly societies as such. You would be creating a different and a parallel order of friendly societies, and I am not at all sure that that would be desirable in view of the fact that these great organisations have so far been content with registration. These are not criticisms of principle, as my noble friend, I think, will admit. We quite agree as to the great benefits which may accrue from the formation of credit banks for agricultural purposes such as those favoured by my noble friend, and therefore we cordially assent to the Second Reading, while reserving such criticisms as we think necessary for the Committee stage.

LORD BELPER: My Lords, before the Bill is read a second time I should like to call the attention of my noble friend Lord Wenlock to subsection (1) of Clause 5—

> "A thrift and credit bank may, if the rules of the society so permit, keep money on deposit with, or borrow money from, any county council or other public body or any central institution being a company registered under the Companies Acts, 1862 to 1900, with limited liability, or a society registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act, 1893, having for its object the creation of funds to be lent out to thrift and credit banks, and having a board of management elected wholly or in part by the bank or by the bank jointly with other similar banks."

I am bound to say I do not understand what the intention of this subsection is. I believe it is the case that under the Small Holdings Act, power was given to county councils to advance money to co-operative societies for purposes connected with the acquiring of small holdings; but, even if that is the case, the provision in this clause goes very much further than that. To begin with, it suggests that a bank may keep money on deposit with county councils. I do not think a county council can take money on deposit, whether the bank wishes to keep its money on deposit with the county council or not. Nor do I think county councils have any power to lend money for any such purpose. This is, of course, a matter for Committee, but I thought it would be convenient that I should call the attention of my noble friend to it at this stage, so that he might be able to move an Amendment himself or explain the object of the clause, and how far it is proposed that the powers under it should go.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, half-past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 25th May, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

MONUMENT TO SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN.

The Comptroller of the Household reported His Majesty's Answer to the Address, as followeth—

"I have received your Address praying that I will give directions that a Monument be erected in the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster, to the Memory of the late Right Honourable Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman; with an Inscription expressive of the high sense entertained by the House of Commons of the eminent services rendered by him to the Country in Parliament and in great Offices of State, and assuring Me that you will make good the expenses attending the same.

"I shall give directions in accordance with your Address."

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz.:—Thames River Steamboat Service Act, 1904 (Amendment) Bill [Lords]; Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First

Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time to-morrow.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz. :—Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time to-morrow.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time to-morrow.

PRIVATE BILL PETITIONS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT COMPLIED WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the Petition for the following Bill, originating in the Lords, the Standing Orders have not been complied with, viz. :—River Wandle Protection Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Report be referred to the Select Committee on Standing Orders.

Rochdale Corporation Bill.—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Argentine North-Eastern Railway Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Skegness Urban District Council Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

King's College, London (Transfer) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—Ordered That, in the case of Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords], Standing Orders 204 and 235 be suspended, and that the Bill be now read a second time.—(*The Chairman of Ways and Means.*)

Bill accordingly read a second time, and committed.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under The Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act, 1907, relating to the River Wye and other waters," presented by Sir Edward Strachey; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 237].

Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under The Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act, 1907, relating to the River Usk and other waters," presented by Sir Edward Strachey; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 238].

Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to request that their Lordships will be pleased to communicate to this House Copies of the Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings, together with Documents deposited in the case of Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Select Committee on Divorce Bills, that they do hear Counsel and examine Witnesses for Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords], and also that they do hear Counsel and examine Witnesses against the Bill, if the parties concerned think fit to be heard by Counsel and produce Witnesses.—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to empower the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the City of Bristol to construct dock railways; and for other purposes." [Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords].

BRISTOL CORPORATION BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

CHARACTER NOTE BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, against; to lie upon the Table.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Harrogate; and Stamford Hill; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Cross Heath, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

DAIRIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Aylesbury, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

FACTORS ACT (1889) AMENDMENT BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

FATAL ACCIDENTS (DAMAGES) BILL [LORDS].

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

FOREIGN TRAWLERS REGULATION BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Hanley and District; Shrewsbury; and Tyseley; to lie upon the Table.

Petition of the North London Sunday School Union, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aberdeen; Boncath; Coxlodge; Gilconiston; Herne Bay; Llanfrechfa Lower; Llanyfydd; Manchester; Newcastle-under-Lyme; Rhoshill; Rosehill; Sandwich; Shipley Division; Southport; Yarrow; and Ynysddu; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Glasgow; Gourdon; Kincardineshire; Innerleithen; and Kelvinside; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANDISE MARKS BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Perth, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petitions against, praying to be heard: From Richmond; Watermen, Lightermen, and Watchmen of the River Thames; and Lightermen, Dues-payers, and Traders upon the Thames; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

Petitions against, praying to be heard by counsel: From Atlantic Transport Company Limited; Association of Master Lightermen and Bargeowners of the Port of London; Berkshire County Council; British Indian Steam Navigation Company Limited; Commercial Gas Company; Commissioners of Sewers for the Limits extending from London Wall to Gravesend Bridge; Commissioners of the Dartford and Crayford Navigation; Company of Proprietors of the Grand Junction Canal; Company of Proprietors of the Lower Navigation of the River Medway; Conservators of the River Thames; Corporation of London; Corporation of Queenborough; County Council of Middlesex; East London Railway Company and the East London Railway Joint Committee; Ellerman Lines Limited; Essex County Council; Executive Officers of the London Committee of Deputies of the British Jews; Gas Light and Coke Company; George Richard Burness; Governors of Bridewell Hospital; Great

Eastern Railway Company, Great Northern Railway Company, Great Western Railway Company, London and North Western Railway Company, London and Brighton and South Coast Railway Company, Midland Railway Company, North London Railway Company, and the South Eastern and Chatham Railway Companies' Managing Committee; Hertfordshire County Council; Honourable Society of the Inner Temple; James Hilditch Gough; Joseph Rank Limited and William Vernon and Sons; Kent County Council; Liverpool Steamship Owners' Association and the Liverpool Shipowners' Association; London and India Docks Company; London Chamber of Commerce; London County Council; London Direct Short Sea Traders' Association; London Tilbury and Southend Railway Company; London Waterside Manufacturers' Association; Master, Wardens and Commonalty of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames; Metropolitan Water Board; Millwall Dock Company; Orient Steam Navigation Company Limited; Owners and Lessees of Wharves and Premises, Manufacturers, Traders, and Freighters on the Dartford and Crayford Navigation; Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, Limited; Representatives of the Urban District Councils of Teddington, Hampton Wick, Hampton, Sunbury, Staines, Ham, Surbiton, Esher, and the Dittons, East and West Molesey, Weybridge, Chertsey, Egham, Marlow and Caversham; Society of Foreman Lightermen of the River Thames; Southend on Sea Corporation; South Metropolitan Gas Company; South Suburban Gas Company; Surrey Commercial Dock Company; Thames Preservation League; Thames Riparian Owners' Association; Timber Trade Federation of the United Kingdom (London Section); Wharfingers Association of the Port of London; William Cory and Son Limited; and William Mitchell, George Barham, John Chapman, Thomas Portch, and William H. Pring; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

Petition from the Commissioners of Sewers for Havering, Rainham, and other levels, against alterations, praying to be heard by counsel; referred to the Select Committee on the Bill.

SALE OF FOODS AND DRUGS ACTS (AMENDMENT) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Abercarn and district; Everton; and Liverpool; to lie upon the Table.

SHOPS BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, against; to lie upon the Table.

SWEATED INDUSTRIES BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, against; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

SHOP HOURS ACT, 1904.

Copy presented, of Order made by the Secretary for Scotland, dated 15th May, 1908, providing for the Early Closing of certain Shops in the Burgh of Govan [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

Copy presented, of Return of Advances made under the Irish Land Act, 1903, during the month of June, 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY (TERRITORIAL FORCE).

Copy presented, of Regulations for the Territorial Force [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ARMY (SPECIAL RESERVE).

Copy presented, of Regulations for the Special Reserve [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF SOUTHAMPTON).

Copy presented, of Order made by the County Council of Southampton altering certain polling districts in the Basingstoke Parliamentary Division [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIAN PRODUCTS (FOREIGN TARIFFS).

Address for "Return showing the approximate per centages of Import Duty levied in various countries on the principal articles exported from India, in continuation of the Return appended to the Fiscal Despatch of the Government of India of the 22nd day of October, 1902."—(*Mr. Remnant.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Cost of Telephone Installations.

COLONEL IVOR PHILIPPS (Southampton): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state what is the approximate average initial and annual recurring cost of erecting and maintaining one mile of telephone line in an ordinary country district of England, where no charge is made on account of wayleaves, when both posts and wire have to be provided, and when wire only has to be provided and fixed to existing posts; and whether a country subscriber is permitted to pay the initial and annual cost of connecting his house to an exchange in lieu of a fixed charge should he desire to do so.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The average cost varies according to the local conditions. The principle, like other postal charges, is one of an uniform method of charge and not based on the actual cost of the particular circuit.

Scale of Pay in Southampton Post Office.

COLONEL IVOR PHILIPPS: To ask the Postmaster-General whether the Return on which the Southampton unit of work is now based was taken some years ago; whether a new Return to ascertain the present unit of work is now being prepared; and, if so, when this new Return will be published and adopted as the basis of classification for Southampton.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The fresh return of work may necessitate an alteration in the future classification of Southampton. I cannot yet say when this will be.

Issue of New Catalogue of Water Colour Drawings in the South Kensington Museum.

MR. T. R. BETHELL (Essex, Maldon): To ask the President of the Board of Education if he can say when it is proposed to issue a new catalogue of water-colour drawings at the South Kensington Museum, as the old catalogue, which was issued in 1893, appears to be out of print, and unobtainable; and whether, in the event of a new catalogue being issued, the biographical notices in it will be found complete without reference having to be made to the catalogue of oil paintings.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) A new edition of the catalogue, to which my hon. friend refers, was published last month. The biographical notices are set out in the form which he suggests.

Fees in Council Schools in Liverpool.

MR. HUTTON (Yorkshire, W.R., Morley): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he can state the number of council schools in Liverpool in which the Board of Education has sanctioned the imposition of fees under Section 4 of The Elementary Education Act, 1891, giving the name of each school, the date when the fee was sanctioned, and the reasons which satisfied the Board of Education that the charges of school fees will be for the educational benefit of the district as required by that section.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) When The Elementary Education Act, 1891, came into operation, the Liverpool School Board submitted a scheme under which they surrendered their right to charge fees in certain schools in which under the Act they were entitled to do so in consideration of obtaining the sanction of the Department under Section 4 of the Act to the charging of fees in certain other schools in which without that sanction such charge would not be permissible. The Department were satisfied that sufficient public elementary school accommodation without payment of fees was provided, and that, having regard to the situation and organisation of the schools in certain parts of the city, they could concur with the school board in their view that the charge of fees would be for the educational advantage of the district. Sanction has been given under Section 4 from time to time in the case of other schools in substitution for certain of the original schools which have since been closed or made free. The following are the schools in which sanction under Section 4 has at one time or another been given. In those schools marked with an asterisk fees are still being charged under that section.

Name of School.	Date of Sanction.
Chatsworth Street Board School - -	19th December, 1891.
Clint Road Board School - - - -	"
North Corporation Board School - -	"
Steers Street Board School - - -	"
Butler Street Board School - - -	"
Daisy Street Board School - - -	"
Roscommon Street Board School - -	"
Queen's Road Board School - - -	"
Stanley Road Board School - - -	"
Upper Park Street Board School - -	"
Webster Road Board School - - -	"
*Brae Street Board School - - -	"
Granton Road Board School - - -	"
Venice Street Board School - - -	"
*Granby Street Board School - - -	"
*Rathbone Board School - - - -	14th August, 1896.
*Sefton Park Board School - - -	"
Arnot Street Board School - - -	19th August, 1897.
*Anfield Road Board School - - -	"
*Longmore Lane Board School - - -	29th July, 1898.
*Lawrence Road Board School - - -	14th October, 1900.
*Greenbank Road Board School - -	10th November, 1900.
Birchfield Road Board School - - -	15th January, 1901.
Green Lane Temporary Board School -	30th April, 1901.
Gwladys Street Board School - - -	30th October, 1901.
*Sudley Road Council School - - -	12th February, 1904.
*Dovedale Road Council School - -	10th January, 1908.
*Morrison Council School - - - -	25th March, 1908.
*Lister Drive Council School - - -	5th March, 1908.

Medical Aid for Ahoghill Post Office Officials.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he can say under what circumstances is medical aid allowed free to the officials attached to Portglenone and Cullybackey Post Office, in County Antrim, and refused to officials connected with Ahoghill Post Office, in the same county.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) There is no medical officer attached to the Ahoghill Post Office, and the staff employed there have not therefore had the benefit of free medical attendance. In accordance with the recommendations of the Select Committee on Post Office Servants, an allowance of 8s. 6d. per annum will in future be made to each official at this office who would be entitled to free medical attendance if a doctor were attached to it.

Promotion of an Overseer in Manchester Post Office.

Mr. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that a telegraphist at Manchester has recently been made an overseer, being promoted over the heads of a number of his fellows; will he say whether the surveyor at Manchester has carried out the recommendation in Paragraph 96 of the Hobhouse Report, that in every case of complaint as to promotion the surveyor shall be required to certify that he has interviewed all the officers affected; and, if not, whether he will state why men with good official records have been passed over by a junior without being informed in any way of the reasons for such action.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have received a memorial from an officer complaining of being passed over on the occasion in question, and his appeal is under consideration.

Italian Sugar Trade.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the recent request of the Italian Government to the Permanent Commission at Brussels for permission to export sugar, which request, though supported by His Majesty's Government, was refused by the Commission, His Majesty's Government intend to acquiesce in this injury to the export trade of Italy and the possible consequent injury to the import trade of the United Kingdom; and is he able to inform the House what course the Italian Government, which thereupon declared that it reserved all its rights, proposes to take in regard to this restriction of its trade imposed by the Commission.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The hon. Member is under a misapprehension. The request of the Italian Government was to remain a party to the Convention under Article VI., and nevertheless to export sugar. If Italy does not remain a party to the Convention she will be free to export sugar. My right hon. friend cannot say what course she will adopt, but in any event we shall be free to import any sugar which she sends us.

Police and Women at Montrose Election.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been drawn to the treatment by the police of three women who were distributing literature outside the Montrose Town Hall on the day of the poll in connection with the recent bye-election; and whether he proposes introducing legislation to ensure that women who are denied the franchise shall at least be guaranteed the same facilities as men for propagating their political opinions.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) My hon. friend has been good enough to send me the newspaper report of this occurrence. No legislation, however, seems to be necessary, for, so far as the administration of the law is concerned, there is no distinction of sex.

Imports of Foreign Cattle.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the constantly-diminishing supply of foreign cattle for slaughter in Great Britain, and the difficulties experienced by those who, for reasons of religion or trade, depend, for the meat or by-products of the freshly killed animals they require, upon the slaughter in this country of a larger number than are now available; and whether he will cause independent inquiry to be made into a scheme for establishing a foreign animals wharf and abattoir in Alderney, which would remove the difficulties referred to.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. There is no statistical evidence of a constantly diminishing supply of foreign cattle. The average number landed in the last three years (1905–7) was 532,789, and in the previous three years (1902–4) 497,188. No representations have been made to us as to any difficulties in obtaining meat or by-products of freshly killed animals, and we see no necessity for the inquiry suggested by my hon. friend.

The American Beef Trust and the English Trade.

MR. BOWERMAN: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the fact that Messrs. Armour, Swift, and three other firms comprising what is known as the American Beef Trust, have acquired or are financing several businesses in Smithfield Market and elsewhere, with the object (in addition to the wholesale trade already done in this country by those firms) of carrying on trade as retailers for the sale of American beef only; whether he is aware that the effect of the action of the Beef Trust is calculated, as was proved by a committee of the United States Senate to be the case in America, to give such trust the power to fix the price of beef to the consumer; whether the Department is in a position to state or ascertain the number of such shops or businesses so controlled; and whether he will consides the advisability of the removal of the existing restrictions upon the importation into Deptford and other similar markets in this country of live cattle for almost immediate slaughter from Continental and other countries officially declared to be free from foot-and-mouth disease, with a view to checking the growth of the trust in question and the giving of employment to a very large number of British workpeople.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I have again communicated with Messrs. Armour, who inform me that they are not interested in any scheme or plan such as that suggested or implied in the Question of my hon. friend. I understand from the Board of Agriculture that they are not prepared to modify the existing regulations with regard to the importation of live cattle.

Public Right of Way Over Railway Bridge at Nine Mile Point.

SIR IVOR HERBERT (Monmouthshire, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the danger caused to the public by the conversion to railway traffic of a bridge over the River Sirhowy over which there is a public right of way to the Nine Mile Point Station of the London and North-Western Railway; whether he has ascertained if Parliamentary powers have now been granted for such conversion; and whether he will intervene to mitigate a serious nuisance and danger to the public and an interference with public rights of way.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The railway company, with whom I have communicated on this subject, do not admit that the bridge referred to by my hon. and gallant friend is or was ever intended as an approach to the passenger station, or that there is a public right of way thereover. They state, however, that another connection between the Sirhowy Railway and the Penllwyn Tramway having now been made, it is probable that railway traffic over the bridge will cease in the course of a few weeks, and that they will then be not indisposed to enter into negotiations with local authorities for the user of the bridge by the public as an approach to the station. I am sending my hon. and gallant friend a copy of the company's letter which deals with the matter at some length.

Unemployment Statistics.

MR. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the percentage of unemployment in the United Kingdom in April among trade unionists other than coal miners.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The percentage of members of trade unions, other than those engaged in coal-mining, who were returned by them to the Board of Trade as unemployed at the end of April was 9·2. This figure was considerably increased by the disputes in the engineering and shipbuilding trades, which have rendered idle a large and increasing number of workpeople engaged in kindred trades. Such workpeople not being directly concerned in the disputes are included in the Returns as unemployed.

MR. REMNANT: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state, with regard to the table at the foot of the employment chart on the first page of the May issue of the *Labour Gazette*, what was the number returned as out of work in each of the trades there mentioned; and whether he will undertake to publish these figures in each issue of the *Labour Gazette*.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Such figures with regard to unemployment as, in the opinion of my advisers, can usefully and safely be published without serious danger of misleading the public, are regularly included in the *Labour Gazette*, and the Board of Trade are at all times ready to receive and consider any representations made to them with a view of increasing the utility of the Returns. The subject is too technical and intricate to be dealt with by Question and Answer; but, if the hon. Member will put himself into communication with the Board of Trade, the officials in charge will be happy to explain to him the difficulties of adopting his present suggestion.

London County Council Tramways—Danger of Stud System.

MR. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the danger to horses and human beings owing to the defective state of the stud system which the London County Council Tramways Committee has put down on the section between Aldgate and Bow; whether he is aware that accidents of a serious character have already occurred; and will he say what action he proposes to take for the safety of the public.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) On the section in question, which is not yet completed, two accidents, one to a man and one to a horse, have been reported by the police as having occurred through contact with a defective stud while the track was being tested. Fortunately neither accident seems to have been of a serious character. Before the lines are brought into use for traffic an inspection will be held and the Board's officers will require to be satisfied that all proper precautions have been taken. I am informed by the County Council that in the meantime any necessary tests of the system will be carried out at night when the traffic is very light.

Cotton Fabric Exports.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he would state the value of the cotton fabrics exported last year to all the countries of the world, and the percentage of increase or decrease represented by such exports over those of the previous year.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The value of cotton piece goods manufactured in this country which were exported to all destinations in 1907 was £81,049,000, which represents an increase over the corresponding figure for 1906 of £5,677,000 or 7·5 per cent. These figures do not include lace and patent net, hosiery, or cotton manufactures unenumerated, and if these are added the value of the exports would have been £90,076,000, representing an increase over 1906 of £6,359,000, or 7·6. per cent.

Imports of Wholly Finished Articles.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he would state the value of wholly finished articles, imported into the United Kingdom in 1906–7, utilised and consumed in this country without undergoing any process of manufacture.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The total value of wholly manufactured articles imported in a state ready for consumption in 1906, so far as any exact classification is possible, is estimated at about £62,500,000, and in 1907 about £61,800,000. It is not possible to state precisely how much of this total represents articles actually consumed in this country, but the value of the re-exports of imported articles of a similar class is estimated to have been about £11,100,000 in 1906 and £12,100,000 in 1907. These estimates have been prepared on a similar basis to those given in the second series of Memoranda on British and Foreign Trade and Industry [Cd. 2337, of 1904] and in the Return moved for last session by the hon. Member for Falkirk Burghs [House of Commons Paper No. 190, of 1907].

Census of Production Act and Small Factories.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can now state whether it is intended to include small factories and workshops among those to whom inquiry schedules under the Census of Production Act will be sent.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) On the advice of the General Advisory Commttee appointed under the Census of Production Act it is intended to issue schedules to all factories and workshops irrespective of their magnitude.

Pay of Crane Drivers at Deptford Victualling Yard.

MR. BOWERMAN: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that hydraulic crane-drivers at Deptford Victualling Yard are receiving from 22s. to 24s. per week, whereas men employed on similar work in the dockyard receive from 27s. to 30s. per week; and whether he will put the men under the Victualling Yard and Dockyard Regulations upon the same footing, and raise their wages to those paid by private employers.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The Victualling Yard rates of pay are fixed with a view to placing the men on the same average footing as those in the royal dockyards. According to my information, the Government rates compare very favourably with those paid by private employers in the district.

Protection of Wharves at Deptford Yard.

MR. BOWERMAN: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the provisions of the Factories and Workshops Act as regards docks and wharves is being contravened at Deptford Victualling Yard, as at no part of the wharf is there any protection provided by rail or otherwise to prevent workmen falling into the river; and if he will have the provisions of the Act thereon carried into effect in that yard.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The statutory rules and orders under the Factories and Workshops Act require that all brakes, dangerous corners, and other dangerous parts of edges of a dock, wharf, or quay, shall, as far as is practicable, having regard to the traffic and working, be securely fenced so that the height of the fences shall be not less than 2 feet 6 inches. The parts of the wharf at Deptford which are thus required to be fenced are specially protected by chains and stanchions 3 feet 6 inches high.

Beetroot Growing in the United Kingdom.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, what was the acreage of beetroot grown in the United Kingdom last year, and what was the average produce per acre; and if he has any official Reports showing that this land would be suitable for the growing of sugar beet.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The acreage of fodder beet (mangold-wurzel) in 1907 was 517,141 acres, and the average produce per acre was 19·57 tons. We have no official Reports showing how much of this land would be suitable for the growing of sugar beet, nor can any accurate estimate be made, as land on which fodder beet grows well is not always suited for sugar beet.

Flooding of the Shannon, near Athlone.

SIR WALTER NUGENT (Westmeath, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he is aware that the small farmers living on the Shannon banks, near Athlone, are suffering great inconvenience and loss owing to the long-continued floods, which are caused or greatly aggravated by the sluice gates at Meelick being neglected or not properly worked; and if he will give instructions to have the said gates more carefully attended to in future.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The Board of Works inform me that the flooding of the lands between Athlone and Meelick is not due to any neglect or the mismanagement of the sluices at the latter place but to the natural flatness of the country and the consequent small fall in the river between these places, which only amounts to about 9 inches in the total distance of 27 miles. The contraction of the river bed at Shannon Bridge further obstructs the escape of flood water. The cost of removing shoals and widening channels would cost a very large sum, and would not ensure an entire discontinuance of floods.

Factories Employing under Five Persons.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state what is the number of factories and workshops in the United Kingdom employing five persons or under; and what is the total number of persons employed in such factories and workshops.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) A calculation was made in respect of the years 1898–9, for the purposes of the inquiry of the Departmental Committee on Workmen's Compensation, with the result that the number of factories employing five hands or less was estimated to be 36,000, out of a total of 95,000. A similar investigation in regard to workshops in respect of the year 1896 showed 50,000 workshops employing five hands or less, out of a total of 81,000 in respect of which Returns were received.

Subsistence Allowance for Telegraphists doing Seasonal Duty at other Offices.

MR. A. DEWAR (Edinburgh, S.) To ask the Postmaster-General whether telegraphists at Edinburgh are forced to leave the city and take up seasonal duty at other offices; whether the subsistence allowance granted by the Department is 3s. a day, and whether this amount has been held to be inadequate by the staff; and whether he will consider the advisability of asking for volunteers rather than compelling members of the staff to leave their homes and suffer pecuniary loss without hope of reimbursement.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) All officers of the Post Office are liable to be detached from their head-quarters when the exigences of the service render it necessary, though of course their convenience is consulted as far as possible, and when suitable volunteers are forthcoming they are first selected. In each case the officer's reasonable additional expenses are defrayed by the Department, and I am not aware of any case where employment on season duty has involved an officer in pecuniary loss. Any such case, if brought to my notice, would receive consideration.

Liquidation of the Joint Stock Trust and Finance Corporation Treasury Prosecution.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether, in connection with the liquidation of the Joint Stock Trust and Finance Corporation, Limited, papers have been laid before the Treasury; and, if so, whether any decision has yet been arrived at in regard to the institution of proceedings against any of the directors of the company.

(*Answered by Sir William Robson*). It is not usual, and I do not think it is in the public interest, that I should state whether papers in any particular matter are before me for consideration in regard to criminal proceedings. What passes between the Law Officers and the Departments in such matters is confidential.

Government Slate Contracts.

SIR BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): To ask the First Commissioner of Works whether any contract for slates to be used for a Government building has lately been given to a foreign contractor.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt*). The Government does not make direct contracts for slates, which are supplied by the contractor. I am unable to discover that foreign slates are being used by an contractor who is now erecting any building for His Majesty's Office of Works; if they have been so used it is without the knowledge or consent of my Department.

Old-Age Pensions.

MR. GOULDING: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of the 304,126 persons aged seventy years and upwards living in towns of a population of 50,000 and upwards according to the last Census, how many will not be entitled to old-age pensions under the Government proposals on account of the possession of incomes exceeding 10s. per week.

MR. GOULDING: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of the 304,126 persons aged seventy years and upwards living in towns of a population of 50,000 and upwards according to the last Census, what proportion is estimated to be entitled to old-age pensions under the Government proposals.

MR. GOULDING: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of the 304,126 persons aged seventy years and upwards living in towns of a population of 50,000 and upwards according to the last Census, how many will not be entitled to old-age pensions under the Government scheme because they are paupers, criminals, lunatics, or aliens.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am not in possession of information which would enable me to furnish the hon. Member with answers to his Questions.

Rebate on Stocks of Foreign Refined Sugar.

MR. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the refusal of the Government to grant a rebate on stocks of foreign refined sugar, which were held in public stores in inland towns or at railway and steamship depots on 18th May, and upon which the old duty had compulsorily been paid, will subject the holders of these stocks to heavy losses; and whether he has made any estimate of the amount which would be required to indemnify these persons from loss in this respect.

MR. McARTHUR: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received representations to the effect that the reduction of the duty on glucose manufactured in the United Kingdom will, if unaccompanied by a corresponding rebate on duty-paid stocks held on 18th May, enable foreign manufacturers, who have the option of bonding imported glucose until it is required for sale, to undersell the home-made article to the extent of the difference between the old and new duties; and what he proposes to do in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am afraid that I have nothing to add to the statements which I have already made in the House on these subjects.

Government Duty on Railway Season Tickets.

MR. JENKINS (Chatham): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that a percentage on season ticket rates is charged by certain railway companies as Government duty; that season ticket holders are thus mulcted twice for income-tax on the amount of their income paid away for the season ticket; and, seeing that season tickets are invariably taken out with railway companies for business purposes, he will consider the advisability of allowing the value of the season ticket to be deducted from the gross income-tax under the heading of annual payments when the holder of a season ticket is rendering his income-tax annual return.

Answered by (*Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The railway passenger duty is a percentage paid by the railway company on fares charged to the passenger whether for season tickets or for single journeys; it is in no way connected with income-tax. With regard to the second part of the Question, travelling expenses incurred in the course of business are allowed as a deduction from the assessment on the profits of the business, but it has been judicially decided that the expenses of travelling from place of residence to place of business do not fall within this category.

India and the Berlin Convention on Wireless Telegraphy.

SIR EDWARD SASSOON (Hythe): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether any expression of opinion has been received from the Government of India as to the provisions of the Berlin Convention on Wireless Telegraphy; if so, whether they desire to participate in them; and, if not, would they be allowed to contract out.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The Government of India have expressed their wish to adhere to the Berlin Convention on its ratification by His Majesty's Government.

Classification of Salt Extracted from Sea by Indians.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether salt extracted from the sea by Indian peasants is classified for taxation purposes as a manufactured article; and whether a tax has to be paid to the Indian Government on salt so extracted.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) Salt extracted from the sea is not specifically classified as a manufactured article; but all salt, whether extracted from the sea or otherwise obtained, is in India subject to a duty. In the maritime provinces, however, licences are issued on special terms for the manufacture of salt by indigenous processes, and for fish-curing establishments salt is made available at little over cost price.

Growth of Flax in Ireland.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the supply of Irish-grown flax is altogether inadequate to the local demand; whether he can state the average quantities of home-grown and foreign-grown flax, respectively, used yearly in Ireland and the approximate value of the same; and whether he can state what steps, if any, are being taken by the Agricultural Department to encourage the growth of flax in Ireland, and with what result.

(*Answered by T. W. Russell.*) The supply of Irish-grown flax is altogether inadequate to meet the local demands in Ireland. In 1906, the last year for which figures are available, it is estimated that the import of flax amounted to 32,424 tons, valued at £1,705,502. In the same year it is estimated that Ireland produced 12,024 tons, the value of which is estimated at £673,344. The following steps have been taken by the Agricultural Department to encourage the growth of flax in Ireland:—A party of Irish farmers and scutch-mill owners have been sent annually to the Continent to learn the methods of their competitors there. Their Reports have then been circulated in the flax-growing districts. Experiments have been conducted annually to determine the best kind of flax seed and the best manures for it. The results of these are also published annually. Information is collected from abroad with regard to the seed crop in the principal seed-raising countries. This information is also circulated for the information of farmers. To show the value of good seed, quantities of the very best have been annually imported and distributed at cost price or in payment as prizes. Samples of seed are tested for farmers at a nominal fee of 3d. per sample. Flax societies have been formed for the joint purchase of seed and the scutching of flax. The Department pay half the salary of the manager for the first year or two. The Department have also trained managers for this purpose. Liberal prizes have been annually offered for scutched flax as well as for the best fields of flax. Experiments have also been conducted in artificial retting. Last year the Department extended this work to County Cork, where an officer is engaged giving his whole time to the revival of what remains of the flax-growing industry there. The results of this work vary with the attention which is paid to it by the people in the different districts. Everyone agrees that there has been a great change in the quality of the seed and in the method of manuring, both of which were in great need of improvement. The increase in the acreage under flax may be taken as some indication of the influence of this work:—

	Acres.
Average area under flax for ten years 1896–1905 - - -	47,500
Area under flax in 1906 - -	55,189
Area under flax in 1907 - -	59,650

Public Works (Ireland) Staff Officers.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the names, length of service, salaries, and qualifying examinations of the seventeen or more staff officers of the Public Works Office, Ireland; and whether he will explain the meaning of the words staff officers as applied to these gentlemen.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) There are seventeen staff officers in the Board of Works whose scales of salary range from £150—10—250 to £350—15—450, and their length of service from twelve to thirty years. Particulars are given in the Estimates; and I think that no useful purpose would be served by giving the details of each officer's case. All of them entered the service as Second Division clerks by open competitive examination. A staff officer is in charge of a section of the clerical work of the office and of the subordinate staff engaged upon it.

Position of Office Assistant in the Office of Public Works, Ireland.

MR. HAZLETON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland why the position of office assistant in the engineering branch of the Office of Public Works, Ireland, which carries a salary of £300 a year, is not an appointment upon the establishment; who has the power of appointment to the position; who occupies it; and what is the length of service and qualifying examination of the present holder.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) There is no recognised post of clerical assistant. The holder is paid out of an allowance made to the Board for temporary clerical assistance in the engineers' branch. The need for creating a permanent post on the establishment was not apparent when the allowance was made. The power of appointing persons to be paid out of the allowance rests with the Board of Works. I am informed that the gentleman at present employed is Mr. Henry A. Jones, who has been in the Board's service for fourteen years, and was found before appointment to possess the requisite experience and qualifications. The Board has, I understand, under consideration a proposal for the appointment of a permanent clerical assistant to the engineer.

Temporary Assistant Surveyors under the Public Works Office, Ireland.

MR. HAZLETON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state whether four new temporary assistant surveyors have recently been appointed under the Public Works Office, Ireland, at a cost of £1,000 a year; who were the gentlemen appointed; what were their professional qualifications; what was the reason of their appointment; and how long it is proposed to retain them in the service of the Office of Works.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) I am informed that the answer to the first part of the Question is in the negative, only one such appointment having so far been made. The person appointed is Mr. C. H. Mitchell, of Dublin, a qualified architect. The appointment was made in order to cope with additional work entailed by the new scheme of building grants for national schools, and to ensure that school managers should be enabled to obtain grants and commence building operations as soon as possible, the architectural work necessary for this purpose being much beyond the powers of the Board's permanent staff of surveyors. Mr. Mitchell's services will be retained while the necessity for them lasts; and, if it be found necessary, further temporary appointments will be made.

War Strength of British Forces.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state of what categories of men the total war strength of the British forces, namely, 1,066,000, consists, distinguishing Regulars, Reserves, Territorials, and native forces, and what proportion of the total cost of £49,000,000 is to be allotted to each category; and if he can in the same way state what categories of men make up the total war strength of the German Army, namely, 7,110,000, and what proportion of the total cost of £51,000,000 is assignable to each category.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The calculations which would be involved by my hon. friend's Question would be difficult to make for the British forces, and still more difficult with regard to the German; but if the hon. Member will explain to me privately the purpose of his inquiries I will see what I can do.

Status of Officers Retiring after Four Years in Command of a Battalion.

SIR ARTHUR BIGNOLD (Wick Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will say whether a colonel retired prior to the signing of the warrant of 1887, having obtained the rank of colonel after four years service as lieutenant-colonel, is in future to be credited as having served as colonel and to be described in the official Army Lists as colonel, such officer being entitled to the description of substantive colonel.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Presumably the Question refers to officers who obtained the rank of colonel after four years in command of a battalion and retired at once on lieutenant-colonel's rates. These officers never were employed as colonels, and consequently cannot be shown as having been so employed. The fact, however, that they hold the rank of colonel is shown in all places where their names appear in the Army List.

Copper Plate Printing of Irish Ordnance Maps.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he will consider the desirability of printing the maps of the Irish Ordnance Survey from copper plates as formerly, inasmuch as it appears that maps printed from stone or zinc plates have to be printed on a soft-surfaced paper which renders them very unsuitable for use in the proceedings in the Land Commission, owing to the running of colour and ink used in defining holdings and marking boundaries, to meet the requirements of the Commissioners.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Perhaps the hon. Member will refer to my reply of 2nd April to a Question on the same subject. Engraving the 6-inch maps on copper was given up some years ago on account of slowness in production and costliness, and the Board see no good reason for returning to that process.

Consolidation of the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act.

MR. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether it is intended to introduce during the present session a Bill to consolidate the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Acts.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) Yes, my noble friend the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries hopes to introduce a Bill for the purpose at an early date.

Poor Law Children.

MR. BATEMAN HOPE (Somersetshire, N.): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state the number of children entirely dependent on the rates on 1st January, 1908.

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) The total number of children who were entirely dependent on Poor Law relief on 1st January last cannot be stated. To a very large extent children are relieved with their parents, who are not necessarily entirely dependent on the relief given them. I may, however, state that on that date the number of children in England and Wales in receipt of relief was 236,900. If from this total the children who had a parent living and who received only some form of out-relief are deducted, the number left is 73,309. Over 63,000 of them received indoor relief.

Diagnosis of Typhoid Fever Outbreak at Kelvinside, Glasgow.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask the Secretary for Scotland what was the nature of the diagnosis which occupied the medical officers of health from 21st to 24th December in connection with the outbreak of typhoid fever at Kelvinside, Glasgow; whether he is aware that a typhoid case can be diagnosed in three hours by means of a bacteriological test; has his attention been called to the fact that one or more of these medical officers have since admitted that they waited during these days to see what would develop; and whether, in view of the results of this delay, he will issue the new regulations with regard to the future.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The period between the 21st and 24th was occupied by the assistant county medical officer in making inquiry into the circumstances of the case, in communicating with the private practitioner in attendance on the case, who was absent at the time of his visit, and in obtaining from him material for the bacteriological investigation. I am aware that the actual process of making the bacteriological test only occupies a very short time. I have no information as to any admission having been made by any of the medical officers to the effect suggested. As regards the last sentence of the hon. Member's Question, I am satisfied that medical officers are fully alive to the necessity for prompt action in such cases, and, from the information before me, I see no reason for issuing any special instructions.

Erection of Landing Place at Shader, Island of Lewis.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state whether the proposed works at the landing place at Shader, Island of Lewis, have yet been put in hand.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) As my hon. friend is aware, the carrying out of this work lies with the local authority, but I am informed that the draft contract has been adjusted and that the contractor will probably be in a position to begin work early in June.

Compensation for Injury to Girl at Saltburn by Gunnery Practice.

MR. WEIR: To ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Admiralty have yet decided on the compensation to be granted to the young girl who resides with her widowed mother at Saltburn, Ross-shire, and who was injured and permanently crippled by gunners from H.M.S. "Cæsar" during gun practice in the summer of 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The young girl referred to was accidentally struck on the leg by a fragment of a shell. The medical evidence available at present points to the probability of there being no permanent injury. It has been decided to offer as compensation a sum of £80, on the understanding that the girl will again be examined by a medical board in June, 1909, when the case will be further considered.

S.S. "Campeador"—Language Test.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the steamer "Campeador," official No. 109,421, recently signed on a crew at the port of Hamburg for the deck and engine-room department; whether he is aware that they were all Spaniards and unable to speak and understand the English language; and if he will make inquiries as to why the language test was not applied to this crew at the time of their engagement.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) With the exception of five officers (who were British) the members of the crew of the "Campeador" were Spaniards. The Consul-General at Hamburg is unable to give positive information as to the knowledge of English possessed by these Spaniards, as the officer before whom they were engaged has since left the office. The Consul-General however reports that strict orders were given by him on 1st January last for the enforcement of the language test, and he adds that all the officers of the company to which the "Campeador" belongs speak both English and Spanish.

Loss of S.S. "St. Cuthbert."

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the loss of the British steamer "St. Cuthbert," which vessel engaged a crew at the port of Antwerp on 16th January, 1908; whether he is aware that, out of a crew of forty-two hands, thirty-two were foreign seamen, the majority of whom could not speak or understand the English language; whether he will inquire of His Majesty's Consul under what circumstances this crew was engaged, seeing that the majority of the crew had an inadequate knowledge of English; whether he is aware that in consequence there was a considerable panic amongst the foreigners at the time of the loss of the ship; and whether he will state how many lives were lost on this vessel.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) My attention has been called to the loss of the s.s. "St. Cuthbert." The crew of the vessel (exclusive of the master and two apprentices) consisted of forty-four hands, of whom thirty-three were foreigners, but His Majesty's Consul at Antwerp reports that all the foreign seamen who were allowed to sign the articles of agreement passed the language test. Three who applied for employment were rejected. According to the Report of the Naval Court held at Boston to inquire into the loss of the vessel the majority of the foreign crew were panic-stricken, and behaved in an unseamanlike manner, The lives of thirteen of the crew and one stowaway were lost with the ship.

Pensions of Ex-Ministers.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury upon what conditions and on what terms Cabinet Ministers are entitled to pensions; whether these pensions vary in amount with length of service in the Cabinet; whether a Cabinet Minister who applies for a pension is required to make a declaration as to his private resources; what this declaration is, and will he give the names of the ex-Cabinet Ministers who are at present in receipt of pensions; the amount of these pensions; the length of service of the pensioners; and the declarations which these Ministers made before being awarded the pensions.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) These pensions are granted in accordance with provisions of The Political Offices Pension Act, 1869 (32 and 33 Vict., c. 60), to which I beg to refer my hon. friend. From this he will see that Cabinet rank is not a necessary qualification for a pension. A declaration is required stating that the applicant's total income is inadequate to maintain his station in life as required by the Act 4 and 5, Will. 4, c. 24, s. 6, re-enacted by the Act already referred to. The further particulars asked for by my hon. friend are shown below—

Name.	Length of Service.	Amount of Pension.
		£
The Right Hon. Viscount Cross - -	Feb. 1874 to April 1880 June 1885 to Feb. 1886 June 1895 to Oct. 1900	2,000
The Right Lord George Hamilton -	Feb. 1874 to April 1880 July 1885 to Feb. 1886 Aug. 1886 to April 1892 June 1895 to Sept. 1903	2,000
The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.	June 1885 to Feb. 1886 Sept. 1889 to June 1892 June 1895 to Oct. 1900	1,200
The Right Hon. Sir John E. Gorst -	Aug. 1886 to Aug. 1892 July 1895 to Aug. 1902	1,200
The Right Hon. Lord Balfour of Burleigh - - - - -	June 1895 to Sept. 1903	1,200
The Right Hon. Gerald Balfour - -	June 1895 to Dec. 1905	1,200

The declarations in each case were held by the First Lord of the Treasury to satisfy the requirements of the Act.

Seamen Failing to Join their Vessels.

MR. HAVELOCK WILSON (Middlesbrough): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state how many seamen failed to join the vessels on which they were engaged at ports in the United Kingdom from 1st July, 1906, to 31st December, 1906, and also from 1st July, 1907, to 31st December, 1907; and whether he can state the number of continuous discharge books withheld from seamen during the latter period who had failed to join their vessels, and distinguish in each case the port of failures to join.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) No figures are available showing the number of seamen who failed to join the vessels for which they were engaged at ports in the United Kingdom for the periods specified in the Question, but the table appended shows the figures at certain ports for the years ended 31st December, 1906, and 31st December, 1907. It also shows the number of cases in which the Board of Trade withheld discharge books from seamen who failed to join their ships during the period from 1st July to 31st December, 1907. I have given instructions for figures to be obtained for the specific periods mentioned in the Question, and will communicate them to my hon. friend.

Port.	Number of failures to join. 1st January to 31st December.		Number of cases in which the Board of Trade took action under Section 65 (2) of The Merchant Shipping Act, 1906.
	1906.	1907.	1st July to 31st December, 1907.
Cardiff and Barry - -	1,718	1,512	12
Glasgow - - -	1,936	1,941	15
Hull - - - -	411	310	9
Liverpool - - -	5,720	6,799	9
London - - - -	1,472	1,436	26
Newport - - -	305	211	11
Shields, N. - - -	349	315	3
,, S. - - -	476	433	—
Southampton - - -	177	673	—
Sunderland - - -	147	167	1
Swansea - - -	116	142	9
Other ports - - -	—	—	23
Total - - -	12,827	13,939	118

Short Time and Limitation of Output in Coal and Cotton Trades.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he has any information of the extent to which short time and limitation of output are being practised at present in the coal mining and cotton industries.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) Short time is being worked by firms in certain branches of the cotton trade at the present time, although the movement is not organised. The most recent Returns to the Board of Trade indicate that employment in the coal trade is generally good, and I have no information that the output is being limited.

Large Employers and the Sixpenny Certificate.

MR. JACKSON (Greenwich): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home

Department whether he has instituted any inquiry among certifying surgeons as to the extent to which large employers of labour made use of the sixpenny certificate, which was originally intended for small employers only; and, if so, whether he will state the result of such inquiry.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Inquiry was made last year through the certifying surgeons, whose reports showed any considerable number of examinations of children and of young persons away from the factory, as to the size of the firms by whom the children or young persons were sent. The information obtained was very incomplete, but indicated that in a considerable proportion of cases the total number of persons employed by the firm was above the limit of ten suggested by the Association of Certifying Surgeons. The question will be borne in mind in connection with any amending factory legislation that may be proposed.

Promotion in the Indian Staff Corps.

Sir SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether in all Indian Army regulations from 1861 to 1895 it was categorically stated that promotion in the Staff Corps was to be governed by length of service and that officers after twenty-six years service, of which eight had been in the Staff Corps, were to become lieutenant-colonels; whether officers who entered the Staff Corps under those regulations are entitled to have them carried out; whether the provisions of the Royal Warrant of 16th January, 1861, which state that officers of the Staff Corps are eligible for either military or civil employ, apply to officers of the Indian Army at the present time; and whether officers of the Indian Army under the rank of major-general who are not considered fitted for the command of a native regiment, but who are considered fitted for extra-regimental or civil employment, may, under the terms of G.G.O. 826, of 1861, be placed on general duty till an opportunity for their further employment offers.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) Promotion in the Staff Corps was given after fixed periods of service till 1904. In 1904 the conditions of promotion were altered, as stated in my Answer to the hon. Member's Question of 7th May, and the altered conditions were applied to officers then in the service, in exercise of the power given by Royal Warrant to the Secretary of State in Council. Officers of the Indian Army are still eligible for civil employ, provided they are properly qualified. G.G.O. of 1861 provided for the removal, on half-pay or pension, of officers unfit for employment, and for the re-employment of officers who, having become unemployed, were perfectly fit for employment. These provisions could give no title to further employment in the case of an officer found unfit for regimental command.

Public Trustee for Ireland.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will consider the question of establishing a Public Trustee in Ireland as now exists in England.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) With a view to the full consideration of this question I have referred the matter to the Lord Chancellor, with the request that he will take an opportunity of considering whether legislation might not be usefully introduced next session, and, if so, upon what lines, regard being had to the differences between the English and Irish law.

Examining Functions of the Royal University of Ireland under the New Bill.

Mr. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, under the Irish University Bill, if it becomes law, the present examining functions of the Royal University of Ireland will be continued for at least so long a period as will afford to present undergraduates of the University at least the minimum necessary opportunity for completing the examinations at present open to external or private students.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) This matter is not dealt with under the Bill, but if my hon. friend will refer to the preliminary draft charters of the two new Universities he will find that a term of five years is allowed for admitting external students to a final examination for an initial degree. I refer to 1 (c) of the clause headed "Conditions as to grant of degrees."

Clerks in the Public Record Office, Ireland.

MR. HAZLETON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state if all the clerks in the Public Record Office, Ireland, hold Civil Service qualifications which entitle them to their present rate of salaries.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) All the permanent clerks hold the necessary Civil Service certificates, but there are also temporary copyists, at present six in number, for whom no Civil Service examination is prescribed.

Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants on the Leslie Estate.

MR. MCKEAN (Monaghan, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the cause of the delay in reinstating the evicted tenants on the Leslie estate, Ballybay, County Monaghan; and if he will urge on the Estates Commissioners the necessity of proceeding with the work.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are endeavouring to effect the reinstatement of three evicted tenants on this estate. They have informed the owner of the advances they are prepared to make. In one case he has stated that he is willing to accept the price offered, and in the other two he has not yet replied. The Commissioners will endeavour to bring the matter to a conclusion.

Evicted Tenants in North Longford and the Toneymore Estate.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the lands of Toneymore, County Longford, are about being acquired compulsorily under the Evicted Tenants Act of last year; and, if so, will a first claim on these lands be given to those evicted tenants in North Longford who are as yet unprovided for.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners do not propose to take any steps for the compulsory acquirement of this untenanted land for the purpose of restoring evicted tenants, because it appears that all the land available would be required for the enlargement of the numerous small holdings in the neighbourhood.

Sale of the Estate of Mrs. M'Cormack at Kilfinton.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the present position as regards the sale of the estate of Mrs. M'Cormack, at Kilfinton, County Longford; whether the agreements have yet been lodged, or have the Estates Commissioners made any offer to purchase; and will he explain the delay in this case.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have had a preliminary inspection made of this estate, and have informed the owner of the price which they have put upon it. The Commissioners understand that the owner is prepared to accept this price, and that he is accordingly about to institute formal proceedings for sale.

Application for Land by John Meleady.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that at the Labourers Act inquiry held at Longford, on 7th January, a man named John Meleady applied for a cottage on the lands of Lloyd Stephenson; whether he is aware that a neighbouring farmer objected, on the ground of a pass which he had the sole right to over Stephenson's land being interfered with; and will he state what were the grounds upon which the inspector rejected the application.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The facts are as stated. The inspector disallowed the application, but not because of the farmer's objection, but because the applicant already held two roods and five perches of land under a judicial tenancy.

Sale of the Estate of the Late J. E. Thompson at Clonfin.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that, by the death which occurred last week of John E. Thompson, the mortgages and charges against his estate interest at Clonfin, County Longford, have lapsed and the estate reverted to his son; and will he now direct the Estates Commissioners to communicate with the agent, Mr. Deane, to secure the sale of this estate, under Section 6 of the Land Purchase Act, 1903.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners will make further inquiries from the agent as suggested by the hon. Member.

Delay in the Sale of the Davoren Estate.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the cause of the delay in the sale of the Davoren estate at Killasonna, County Longford; whether the agreements, including the agreement to subdivide the grass farm amongst the tenants, have ever been lodged; and, if so, why the tenants are still compelled to pay their old full rents to the landlord instead of the abated sum to the Estates Commissioners.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) No purchase agreements have been lodged in the case of this estate, but the Estates Commissioners have directed their inspector to report upon the estate in order that they may estimate the price which they should offer for it with a view to its resale to the tenants.

Cattle Driving in Ireland—Persons under Bail to keep the Peace.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the total number of persons in Ireland now under rules of bail under the Statute of Edw. III., or under the power of Justices Commissioners, for complicity in cattle raids or other disturbances arising from agrarian causes; and whether proceedings have been taken in any case to escheat recognisances, and with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The number of persons in Ireland now under bail to keep the peace for the causes mentioned in the Question is 921. Recognisances have been estreated in three of the cases, and proceedings are pending in a fourth case.

Purchase of Irish Estates.

MR. SHEEHAN (Cork County, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether it is customary with the Estates Commissioners to deal with estates in their order of priority; whether in any cases estates are taken out of this order and specially dealt with; if so, what principles are observed by the Commissioners as governing factors in those estates which are exceptionally favoured; and is he aware that complaints are being made by the tenants on smaller properties that their interests in this way are unfairly treated, and that the poorer landlords and tenants are placed at a disadvantage by the methods of administration pursued by the Estates Commissioners.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) It is the practice of the Estates Commissioners to deal with estates in the order in which the purchase agreements are lodged, but in a few instances the Commissioners have accelerated the inspection of estates with a view to the reinstatement of evicted tenants or to the termination of acute differences existing between the landlord and tenants. The Commissioners are not aware that any complaints of the nature mentioned in the Question have been made.

Distress in Belfast.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the statement made at a recent meeting of the Charity Organisation in Belfast to the effect that, owing to the short time in the mills and factories, distress was exceptional, and that only £7 had been received from the proprietors of the mills and factories in response to an appeal for subscriptions to the relief fund; is he aware that the Lord Mayor stated that there was a great deal of suffering in the city of Belfast at present owing to the lack of work, that many of the mill-workers were able to earn only a few shillings per week, that their husbands were out of work, and that they had to support the households with their earnings; whether he can say if any general attempt is being made locally to meet this exceptional distress; and whether he will advise the local authorities to start relief works as a means of mitigating it.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board have learnt that there is at present an increased demand for relief in Belfast in consequence of distress arising from industrial depression. The Board, however, have no reason to believe that the resources of the union will be inadequate to meet any distress which may arise, and they have no present grounds for making any special representations on the subject to the local authorities. If exceptional measures for affording outdoor relief should, in the opinion of the board of guardians, become necessary, the guardians will no doubt apply for extended powers under Section 13 of the Local Government Act.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

The New Howitzer.

MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the pattern of the new howitzer has yet been finally approved of; and whether its weight will be greater or less than the existing gun.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddingtonshire): The pattern for the new howitzer has not yet been finally approved, and until this has been decided it is not possible to give any information as to its weight.

MR. ASHLEY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say approximately what the effective range will be?

MR. HALDANE: No, Sir.

Military Manœuvres in the New Forest.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his legal advisers have as yet approved of the draft agreement prepared on behalf of the Court of Verderers for the joint regulation by them and by the War Office of the proposed military manœuvres in the New Forest; and, if so, what is the position under that agreement of the Court of Verderers with reference to any claim for damage made by a commoner.

MR. HALDANE: A draft agreement has been prepared by the Treasury solicitor, and has been forwarded by the War Office to the Court of Verderers for their consideration. I am not, therefore at present able to reply to the last part of the Question.

General Baden-Powell's Newcastle Speech.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that to the meeting recently addressed by General Baden-Powell at Newcastle-on-Tyne the Press had been invited in the usual manner, and that five reporters were present seated at the table provided for them; whether he has been informed that the reporters affirm the accuracy of their reports; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

MR. HALDANE: I have already given to the House the information which was furnished to me on the subject. There appears to have been some misunderstanding as to the nature of the occasion and as to what actually happened. I do not think it likely that a similar misunderstanding will occur again, and, therefore, it does not seem to me worth while to enter upon the laborious investigation which I should have to enter upon before I could be sure of having reached the true view of the merits of the controversy.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON asked whether in the case of such speeches being made by generals or other officers of the British Army the War Office ever thought it important to exercise any supervision at all, and whether the Secretary for War did not consider that such utterances were gravely calculated to weaken the relations between this country and foreign Powers.

Mr. HALDANE: Yes, we do think it worth our while, and we look after them very closely. It is always to be regretted that such utterances are made, but the point is not as to principle, but as to the facts in this particular case.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: Then may I ask, does the right hon. Gentleman still adhere to the reflection cast on the accuracy of the reporters?

Mr. HALDANE: There are two reflections—one as to the accuracy of the reporters, and the other as to the accuracy of the general. The difficulty is to decide between the two.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that five reporters are agreed as to the accuracy of the report?

Mr. HALDANE: I do not know how many.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: Then, may I finally ask, whether, supposing this statement to be accurate, and the lecture is to be regarded as of a private nature, such declarations are regarded as properly part of the military training?

Mr. HALDANE: The question is as to what was actually said, and it would require a laborious investigation to get at the truth. That would distract my attention from many other matters.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: Does not the right hon. Gentleman think this is a case for "laborious investigation"?

Mr. FLYNN (Cork County, N.): May I ask whether the word of one general is worth that of five reporters?

[No Answer was returned.]

The Northumberland Artillery Militia.

Sir ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Northumberland Artillery Militia are to be called on for three weeks' training in July next at Berwick-on-Tweed, where there are no guns, and where the range is condemned for musketry; and, if so, in what manner it is proposed to train this regiment; and whether, with a view to the saving of public money, he will consider the advisability of the officers and men being merely assembled at the barracks, Newcastle-on-Tyne, in order to explain to them the new Territorial Army enlistment terms, and then disbanded.

Mr. HALDANE: Arrangements for the training of Royal Garrison Artillery Militia during the coming season have been made by General Officers Commanding-in-Chief, in accordance with instructions issued from the War Office. They have been instructed to arrange that when possible guns may be placed at the disposal of Militia corps, and that when this cannot be done, the training is to be directed as much as possible toward instructing the men in gun laying, in carbine and marching drill, duties in camp, setting-up drill, and physical exercises.

*Sir ROBERT HOBART: Are there any other Artillery Militia regiments in a similar plight, having neither guns nor rifle ranges for use at their trainings?

Mr. HALDANE said the War Office were doing their very best. This was the last training of the kind. There would become fewer Artillery, and the War Office was giving them in difficult circumstances the training most likely to suit them for the new duties in the Field Artillery.

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): Has this battery any guns, and is there any range?

Mr. HALDANE: They are Garrison Artillery, who usually fire out to sea.

Mr. ASHLEY: Does the right hon. Gentleman deny the statement that they have no range and no guns?

Mr. HALDANE: Usually Garrison Artillery have no range, because they fire out to sea.

British Expenditure on Land Forces.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the figures for annual expenditure of the British Empire on land forces placed before the House on 14th May includes, in the amount of £49,000,000 set down for British land forces, the cost of forces having an organisation in troops or battalions or gun detachments paid for from Civil Service Estimates or from Colonial funds as stated to the House in former years.

Mr. HALDANE: The figure of £49,000,000 includes the expenditure from Colonial Office Votes on Protectorate Forces; but not the expenditure from the funds of the Colonies.

The Special Reserve.

Mr. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will permit men who have served their time in the Regular Army and in the Reserve to enlist in the Special Reserve for a period of less than six years, such enlistment to terminate on their attaining the age of thirty-six.

Mr. HALDANE: This proposal would involve the adoption of a system of enlistment, the period for which would depend on the age of a man and not on a defined length of service. The proposal has been carefully considered, but it is not found expedient to adopt it.

Mr. ASHLEY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he deliberately proposes to throw away the services of thousands of men who have served seven years, and if he prefers men with six months training.

Mr. HALDANE: What we are endeavouring to get in the Special Reserve is young men fit for service; we do not want old men.

Mr. ASHLEY: Does the right hon. Gentleman deny that a man between the ages of thirty and thirty-six is fit to take the field?

Mr. HALDANE: After the age of thirty a man gets yearly less fit to take the field.

Mr. ASHLEY: Why is a man between twenty-nine and thirty considered more fit?

Mr. HALDANE: A line must be drawn somewhere.

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): Can the right hon. Gentleman tell the House the average age of the Old Guard of Napoleon in 1815?

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman call in a few amateur generals to assist him?

[No Answer was returned.]

Artillery Batteries.

Mr. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what was the total strength, all ranks, of the thirty-three batteries now used as training batteries on 1st October, 1907, and on 1st May, 1908; and what was the number of horses in those batteries on the dates mentioned.

Mr. HALDANE: The figures are as follows:—

	1st Oct., 1907.	1st May, 1908.
Strength (all ranks)	4,545	3,406
Horses - - -	1,818	1,464

The men represented by the difference in the numbers have been posted to the service batteries so as to make room for the men of the Special Reserve to train.

Mr. ASHLEY: Do these figures support the contention of the right hon. Gentleman that there has been no reduction in the strength of the Field Artillery?

Mr. HALDANE: Most certainly they do. The right hon. Gentleman is under a misapprehension in thinking that all the batteries said to exist in 1899 actually existed. Many were on paper only and I am busy now raising the force to its proper strength.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Do I understand that the 1,140 men who constitute the reduction have gone to other service batteries?

Mr. HALDANE: I have not reduced a single Regular, nor shall I do so until I have four or five to take their place, which may not be for some time.

Bulford and Tidworth Barracks.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that there is practically no accommodation for married officers at Bulford and Tidworth where large bodies of troops are quartered, and that the same conditions prevail at the Cavalry School, Nether Avon; and what steps he proposes to take to remedy a state of affairs so unfair to the officers and detrimental to the efficiency of the service.

MR. HALDANE: I am aware that married officers find considerable difficulty in obtaining accommodation at these and other similar stations. The whole question is now receiving the consideration of the Army Council.

MR. ASHLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider an offer made by a private owner of land to build the houses if the War Office will rent them?

MR. HALDANE: We have considered that.

Regimental Designations.

SIR IVOR HERBERT (Monmouthshire, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the inconvenience created by continuing officially to designate infantry regiments of the Line as Territorial regiments; and whether he will consider the advisability of confining that official designation to units of the Territorial Army.

MR. HALDANE: The designation "Territorial" has now ceased to be applied to Line regiments. It has already been dropped in the Army List, and will be dropped in future Gazettes.

Territorial Army—Remuneration of Sergeant-Instructors.

SIR IVOR HERBERT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any grant will be made to sergeant-instructors of the Territorial Army who are entrusted with the care of arms, in lieu of the allowance hitherto paid to them from Volunteer regimental funds; and whether he will see that non-commissioned officers who served under the old conditions are not losers by reason of their having continued their service in the Territorial Army.

MR. HALDANE: The Territorial Force regulations contain the same provision as that in the Volunteer Regulations for the remuneration of the Permanent Staff for cleaning arms and doing other duties outside their ordinary military work. The custody and care of arms are included in the duties covered by ordinary Army pay. County Associations upon whom the payment of allowances now devolves will doubtless see that payments, which were justifiable in the past, are continued if the special work continues for which they may be given. The Army Council is not prepared to sanction the payment of excessive rates of extra remuneration solely because they were paid by Volunteer corps.

MR. ASHLEY: Am I to understand that the right hon. Gentleman stands by the letter of the Adjutant-General in 1903 giving certain special rates to non-commissioned officers in the London district?

MR. HALDANE: I do not remember that.

SIR IVOR HERBERT: Is it left entirely in the hands of the Association?

MR. HALDANE: Subject to this, that the Army Council must not spend money outside the regulations.

The Monmouthshire Regiment.

SIR IVOR HERBERT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, by a communication from the War Office, dated 17th February, 1908, authority was given for the infantry battalions of the Volunteers in Monmouthshire to be formed into and be known as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions of the Monmouthshire Regiment; whether the officers and men of those battalions took service in the Territorial Army on the distinct understanding and with the assurance that their units would bear the county title and be organised as a Territorial regiment of three battalions; why that authority has been withdrawn by a letter, dated 22nd April, 1908; and why those battalions are forbidden to make use of their county title or to be organised regimentally.

MR. HALDANE: The facts are as stated, except that so far as the Army Council are aware the Monmouthshire Battalions have not been forbidden to make use of their county title. Some misapprehension appears to have arisen on this point owing to the terms of the Royal Warrant, dated 30th March, 1908, in which the Monmouthshire battalions are shown as forming part of the corps of the South Wales Borderers. For technical reasons connected with the appointment of permanent staff this arrangement is essential, but it has been decided that such incorporation of Territorial battalions in a corps need not affect either their county titles or their regimental organisations. The Monmouthshire units referred to will in future, while still forming part of the corps of the South Wales Borderers, be styled officially as the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions of the Monmouthshire Regiment.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): May I ask why this regiment which has had a title for 100 years is now to be deprived of it?

MR. HALDANE: I did not say that.

SIR IVOR HERBERT: Are the three battalions to be organised as a regiment, and known as the Monmouthshire Regiment?

MR. HALDANE: Their official designation is the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Battalions Monmouthshire Regiment. They are the Monmouth Regiment.

The King and the Army.

*__SIR CHARLES DILKE__: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will explain to the House a recent notification by the War Office as to the effect of the lapse of the appointment of Commander-in-Chief; whether it is the case that the lapse occurred in or before the issue of the letters patent published in the *Gazette* of 12th February, 1904, giving to the Army Council authority to do and execute every power and thing which formerly appertained to the Secretary of State for War or to the Commander-in-Chief; whether the War Office notification appearing in the Military Intelligence of Monday last declares that the statutory powers under Section 183, sub-section (2), of the Army Act have reverted to the King; and, if so, how it is that such powers were not covered by specific transfer in the letters patent of all prerogative powers as well as the general transfer of every power formerly appertaining to the Secretary of State for War or to the Commander-in-Chief.

MR. HALDANE: The power of the Commander-in-Chief to reduce non-commissioned officers to a lower grade or to the ranks is granted by Statute under Section 183 (2) of the Army Act. When the appointment of Commander-in-Chief lapsed, it was held that as his statutory powers could only be granted to the Army Council by statute, and as these powers through the lapse of the appointment had come to an end, all cases of reduction should be submitted to the Sovereign and approved by His Majesty. This is one of the statutory powers which it is proposed to transfer to the Army Council by the Army Council Bill. Since the date of the lapse of the appointment of the Commander-in-Chief all cases have been submitted to His Majesty. The letters patent are dated 6th February, 1904, and the date of the retirement of Lord Roberts from the post was 11th February, 1904. The Bill will distribute the powers in the same way as before, reserving to Parliament the same responsibility.

Territorial Forces—Outfit Allowance.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the County Associations of the Territorial Forces pay any of their working expenses from the outfit allowance, or whether the allowance for clothing is exclusively for outfit.

MR. HALDANE: With the exception of the grant for rent of property and buildings the grants made to County Associations are not ear-marked for any service but may be used indiscriminately upon the legitimate function of the Association.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): Do I understand that these Associations are allowed to sweat some of the corps?

MR. HALDANE: We leave them purposely a free hand. Otherwise a mass of red tape might terminate their young existence.

Army Boot Contracts.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in consequence of the change in Army boot contracts, whereby the contractor is allowed to close some portion of the uppers by machine, which has hitherto been closed by hand, the contractor has made allowance by receiving a much less price per pair than formerly; and, if so, can he state the amount thus saved?

MR. HALDANE: As an experiment tenders were called for last year on a specification requiring hand closing only. It was found that in some cases this requirement could not be complied with, and the experiment was dropped in those cases, and has since been dropped altogether. The question of requiring any rebate is under consideration.

Reduction of the Artillery.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has now finally abandoned the intention expressed by him in July, 1906, to get rid of sixty-seven officers and 3,712 men of other ranks of the Royal Horse and Field Artillery, and whether it is still intended to reduce the Horse and Field Artillery by the 2,400 men scheduled for dismissal in the Army Estimates for this year.

MR. HALDANE: The policy of the Government in regard to this matter—a policy which has been frequently explained to the House—has not in any way changed

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Which policy, the reduction of 3,712 men or of 2,400 men?

MR. HALDANE: I think the hon. Gentleman must have forgotten the explanation I have given. We proposed first to raise eighteen batteries of Special Reserve men, but later on, on the advice of the General Staff, we reduced the number to fifteen.

Re-armament of the Artillery.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how much money was spent on the re-armament of the Royal Horse and Field Artillery in 1905; by what sum the total Army expenditure of 1908–9 exceeds the total expenditure of 1905, after deducting the money spent for re-arming the Artillery; and by how many officers and men the Regular Army with the colours and the Militia have been reduced between October, 1905, and May, 1908.

MR. HALDANE: In giving these figures I must warn the right hon. Gentleman of certain points which might otherwise mislead him: (1) The expenditure on re-armament in 1905–6 has been replaced to the extent of over £500,000 in the Estimates of 1908–9 by expenditure on other armament services. (2) There is normally a fall in the strength of the Regular Army between October and May, owing to the trooping season. (3) The total expenditure includes the pay of reservists (increased by some 39,000 since October, 1905) and other important items which increase automatically without reference to the strength of the Army. Subject to these points the figures are:—Expenditure on re-armament 1905–6, £1,478,000. Decrease in total Army expenditure after deducting this sum (expenditure on loans has been forgotten by the right hon. Gentleman), £429,000. Difference in actual strength between 1st October, 1905, and 1st May, 1908—Regulars: Officers, 431; men, 23,154. Militia: Officers, 237; men, 4,204. The Militia figures are taken up to 1st April, 1908, those for May not yet being available.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Are we not spending more this year, apart from the expenditure on the Artillery, than in 1905, and are we not getting a very much smaller number of men?

MR. HALDANE: No. The right hon. Gentleman has forgotten that the decrease on the total Army expenditure is £429,000.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: If the figures are correct the expenditure for 1908–9 shows a reduction of £1,200,000 compared with 1905–6. But in that year the expenditure on artillery was £1,400,000, which gives a considerable balance in excess available this year as against 1905.

Mr. HALDANE: But the right hon. Gentleman has forgotten there is a large expenditure on re-armaments and under other heads which bring about the increase.

Territorial Field Artillery.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the condemnation by military opinion of the proposal to create 182 batteries of Territorial Field Artillery, he proposes to persevere in that scheme, or whether he will now consent to limit it to an experiment with selected batteries.

The right hon. Gentleman added that his Question originally contained a reference to the debate in the House of Lords, in which the Territorial Artillery was described as a gamble, but the reference had been struck out by the officials.

Mr. HALDANE: Perhaps I had better simply answer the Question on the Paper. To the first part of the Question, Yes; to the second part, No.

Mr. ARTHUR LEE: Quite apart from the military opinion referred to, has not the scheme been described by a prominent Member of the Cabinet as a "big gamble"?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member can acquaint himself with that; the statement is open to everybody to read.

Sir IVOR HERBERT: Is the right hon. Gentleman prepared to accept the view that there has been universal condemnation of the proposal?

Mr. HALDANE: Certainly not. All the advice I have received is the other way.

Mr. ASHLEY: As a matter of fact, where is the right hon. Gentleman going to find ranges for all these batteries?

Mr. HALDANE: I do not think that arises out of the Question on the Paper.

Cost of Battery Upkeep.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what is the difference between the annual cost of upkeep of a field battery of Royal Artillery on the lower establishment, and of a battery on the two-gun training establishment, respectively; and what is the estimated annual cost of one of the proposed field batteries of the Territorial Force, including camp expenses, pay of the staff, officers and men, care and maintenance of guns, sheds, etc., ammunition, and all other charges.

Mr. HALDANE: The difference in annual cost between a lower establishment battery and a training battery of field artillery is about £4,500. The annual cost of a Territorial field battery is about £2,400.

Horses for the Army.

Sir SAMUEL SCOTT (Marylebone, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the numbers of horses in the United Kingdom suitable for Army purposes under the several headings of riding horses, light draught horses, and heavy draught horses; and what is the date of the last available Returns.

Mr. HALDANE: No regular census of horses in the United Kingdom is taken by the remount officers. From the figures which they furnish from time to time it may be estimated that there are available for Army purposes approximately 150,000 riding horses, 500,000 draught and 20,000 pack-horses. The figures reported do not discriminate between heavy and light draught horses.

Viscount HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): Is the right hon. Gentleman referring to horses for the Regular Army only or for the Territorial Army?

Mr. HALDANE: I was speaking of the number of available horses throughout the country suitable for either branch of the service.

Training of Special Reserve Recruits.

Sir SAMUEL SCOTT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether recruits enlisted under the Territorial Army Act for the Special Reserve are sent to the depots of their affiliated Regular battalions for recruit training; whether it has been found impossible to give these recruits the advantage of being trained in large squads with the recruits of the Regular battalion owing to their being armed with the old rifle instead of the new rifle; and, if so, whether he will rectify this anomaly at an early date.

Mr. HALDANE: Special Reserve recruits of the Infantry are sent to the depots of their affiliated Regular battalions for recruit training; Regular and Special Reserve recruits are allotted to squads at the discretion of the officer commanding the depot. The fact that Special Reserve recruits have not yet been provided with the new rifle does not prevent their being trained in squads with Regular recruits if the commanding officer adopts this system. Pending their re-armament additional drill purpose short rifles are being provided for issue to the depots at the earliest possible date.

Territorial Force Pay.

Viscount VALENTIA (Oxford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why in Army Orders, Special, 18th March, 1908, no mention is made of rates of pay for quartermaster-sergeant, colour-sergeant, squadron sergeant-major, bugler, fifer, piper, or drummer; and whether it is to be understood that these non-commissioned officers and men are to receive pay as shown in page 7, leaflet No. 2, Service in the Territorial Force.

Mr. HALDANE: If the noble Viscount will refer to Paragraph 25 of Part II. of the Army Order in question, he will find it clearly laid down that pay for the Territorial Force will be at the rates and under the conditions laid down in the pay warrant for corresponding ranks in the Regular Army except where otherwise stated. It was considered unnecessary to reprint all the rates of pay in Appendix IV.; typical ranks only being given. The pay will be as set forth in the leaflet.

Territorial Artillery.

Mr. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that in the opinion of military experts the 182 batteries of Territorial artillery would be useless for defending the country against invasion, he could see his way to spending the money required for the Territorial artillery on Regular artillery instead.

Mr. HALDANE: No, Sir.

Mr. HUNT: How many military authorities have distinctly stated that the Territorial Army will be practically——

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: That is a Sunday School Question.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. Member must give notice of his Question.

Mr. HUNT: May I ask another Question?

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. Member may ask Question No. 23—the next on the Paper in his name.

Bands for the Special Reserve.

Mr. HUNT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government will provide the band instruments for the new Special Reserve; and, if not, are the band instruments of the old Militia battalions to be used; is he aware that these band instruments are the private property of the officers of the battalions, and that for eleven months in the year they will be used in connection with training Special Reserve recruits, involving heavy wear and tear during this period; and whether he will take steps to prevent the officers of the battalions from being saddled with this expense and the usual extra pay of the band sergeant from their own pocket.

Mr. HALDANE: The band of a Reserve battalion will be in the same position as the band of a Militia battalion is at present, and will officially exist as such during the period the battalion is out for annual training. During the non-training period the band may accept private engagements, as Militia bands do—but it cannot be ordered to play, as bandsmen of a Reserve battalion serve under the same condition as a private of the Special Reserve, their liability to be called out being limited by Paragraph 30 of the Territorial and Reserve Forces Act. The band instruments of the Militia units will be used by those units when they are converted into Special Reservists.

MR. HUNT: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman increase his proposed allowance?

MR. HALDANE: I do not think that arises out of the Question on the Paper.

Ordnance Factory Vote.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the actual amounts which will be expended this year on machinery and stores materials of all kinds in the two following divisions, for those supplied by the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich and for those supplied by contract, respectively; and the names of the firms and the situation of their works supplying the materials, stores, and machinery by contract.

MR. HALDANE: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to expenditure within the Ordnance Factory Vote. The provision under that Vote for 1908–9 is as follows: Materials, stores and machinery to be supplied by contract, £1,169,000; machinery to be supplied by the Ordnance Factories, £31,000. The value of the stores supplied by the Ordnance Factories as finished work is included in the £2,677,000 shown as the cost of production under Sub-head H. of the Vote. The actual expenditure, as well as the names and addresses of the firms, are not yet known.

MR. CARLILE: Will the information when obtained be available for the House?

*MR. HALDANE: Certainly, as regards the actual expenditure.

Civil Servants and Territorial Camps.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether military pay, which is given during the annual training in camp, will be withheld from any Civil servants who are members of the Territorial Army.

MR. HALDANE: A Civil servant attending a training camp will draw a sum equal to the amount of his civil pay unless any expense is incurred on his behalf by his Department in providing for his duties during his absence. In this case he will draw both Civil and military pay, but he will only be allowed to draw them both during the period that this expense is incurred.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a Civil servant is required to provide a substitute when from duty, and it often costs not only all his Civil pay but part of his military pay in addition?

MR. HALDANE: That is a Post Office Question which, I believe, is under consideration.

Army Pensioner in Workhouse.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been directed to the case of an ex-soldier who, having served through the South African War with the Scots Fusiliers and gained the Victoria Cross at Colenso, for going to the assistance of an officer at the imminent risk of his own life, has been charged at Ashton with refusing to perform his task whilst an inmate of the workhouse, to which he was admitted, with his wife and three children, being unable to work owing to varicose veins; and whether, having regard to the fact that this man's pension amounts to £10 per annum only, and that he and his wife and three children are now paupers in a workhouse, it is contemplated to take any, and, if so, what, steps for his relief.

MR. HALDANE: The hon. and learned Member presumably refers to the case of George Ravenhill, V.C. This case is still under investigation.

Case of Edward Gallagher.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has any, and, if so, what, statement to make in reference to the case of Edward Gallagher, to which his attention was directed on 2nd April, 1908, by the hon. Member for South Donegal, and into which he promised to make inquiries when asked whether he was aware that Gallagher, who served in the Inniskilling Fusiliers from 12th July, 1893, till his discharge on 10th April, 1903, his character being described on his discharge paper as very good, had ten years and six months, out of his total service of eleven years and nine months, of continuous service abroad, was on active service in India and South Africa, and the holder of two medals and six clasps, but on discharge only received an allowance of 6d. a day by getting attached to the Army Reserve, and that this allowance must soon cease; and whether, having regard to the fact that Gallagher was in rapid consumption and discharged as incurable from the Ballyshannon Union Hospital, what steps, if any, will the authorities take to secure him from destitution for the remainder of a life which is now drawing to its close from hardships sustained in military service.

Mr. HALDANE: I am afraid the hon. and learned Member has not yet received a communication from the War Office of the 7th instant, to the effect that immediate steps had been taken to inquire into the case, but that in the meantime the man had died. I may add that nothing was known of the case until the hon. Member drew my attention to it.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I put the Question on 2nd April, that on 24th April the man died; that nothing was done for three weeks; also that on the very day the man died of tuberculosis in Ballyshannon Workhouse an official document came from a Board of Officers in Londonderry, ordering him to go there to have his case investigated? Will this encourage enlistment in Ireland? Did I not at the time tell the right hon. Gentleman the man was dying, and did he not promise immediate attention?

Mr. HALDANE: The Board was got together without delay to investigate the case.

Case of Richard Graham.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been directed to the case of Richard Graham, an inmate in the workhouse, Ballyshannon, who having served twenty-four years in the Army, thirteen years in the Royal Artillery, and eleven years in the Suffolk Regiment, twenty out of his twenty-four years service having been passed in India, where he was on active service in the two Afghan campaigns, was invalided home and is now destitute; what is the amount of Graham's pension at present; and what steps, if any, does the War Office intend to take with a view to his relief in these necessitous circumstances.

Mr. HALDANE: This man is drawing a pension of 7d. a day, the highest rate for which he is at present eligible. As he received a medal for the Afghan War, 1879–1880, he will, when he reaches the age of sixty-five in September next, be eligible for a special campaign pension of 1s., in lieu of the present pension of 7d., provided that he is then in necessitous circumstances. He should then forward his application to the Commissioners of Chelsea Hospital.

*Captain FABER (Hampshire, Andover): Will the man get the pension at sixty-five, or will the grant be a matter for consideration?

Mr. HALDANE: It will depend on whether he is in necessitous circumstances.

Case of Thomas T. Crowley.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been directed to the case of Thomas T. Crowley, of Bank Street, Ballyshannon, who is now seventy-six years of age, and having served in the 2nd Queen's Regiment in the West Indies, Cape, and Malta from 1857 till

1867, and obtained two good-conduct badges, was discharged owing to an injured leg on a pension of 6d. a day, which was increased in 1877 to 8d. a day; and whether, having regard to the fact that Crowley is, by reason of advanced age and ill-health contracted in military service, unable to work, and that he and his wife and a sister-in-law, who lives with them and gets 2½d. a day outdoor relief, are otherwise wholly dependent for subsistence on this meagre pittance, any, and, if so, what steps will be taken to relieve him in his destitution.

MR. HALDANE: It has not been found possible to trace this man on the information given in the Question. Will the hon. and learned Member be so good as to forward to the War Office any further particulars which are available, including the date of the man's discharge.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I will, if the War Office will pay any attention to it.

Service Dress Jacket.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the Pimlico Army Clothing Stores supply the service dress jacket for 9s. 3d. complete, without badges and titles, and that the inclusive average cost of materials is 6s., Pimlico price for civilian being 5s. 6d.; and will he say whether they are supplying under cost price, or whether they are being made by sweated labour.

MR. HALDANE: The statements in the Question as to price are correct. The cost of civilian labour mentioned is that paid for the special making up of individual garments by civil labour, and this cannot be compared, as the hon. Member suggests, with the cost of manufacture in large quantities by ordinary factory processes.

MR. HUNT: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he cannot get these things cheaper in America?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the service dress jackets being made for the County Associations Territorial Force by private contractors are being made for 1s. 5½d., 2s., 2s. 3d., 2s. 6d., 2s. 9d., and 3s. per jacket; and, the Pimlico price being 5s. 6d. for civilian labour, whether he will insist on the inclusion of the Fair Wages Clause in Government contracts issued by the County Associations.

MR. HALDANE: The War Office has no knowledge of the rates paid by County Associations for jackets. As I have already explained, the attention of the Associations will be drawn to the Fair Wages Clause.

Service Pantaloons and Trousers.

MR. T. F. RICHARDS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will state the price of the new service pantaloons and trousers supplied by the Pimlico stores to the Territorial Force; the inclusive cost of material; and the cost of civilian labour.

MR. HALDANE: Service dress pantaloons and trousers are not supplied made up from the Royal Army Clothing Department to the Territorial Force. County Associations may, if they choose, demand material ready cut out, and the charge for this would be, for pantaloons per pair 9s. 3d., and for trousers 5s. 11d. The prices for making up would be arranged by the County Associations, and would vary in different localities

War Office and Eltham Common.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the alarm caused by the report that the Army Council are proposing to build over Eltham and Kidbrook Commons; and whether the London County Council have forwarded the resolution passed by them on 14th April this year, asking the Army Council, in connection with any proposal affecting Eltham Common, to secure the preservation of the existing trees, and to answer that nothing had been done to interfere with the existing use of the common by the public and the existing rights of common; and, if so, what reply was given.

Mr. HALDANE: The proposal to erect buildings for the Royal Army Medical Corps on Eltham Common has been dropped. As regards the rest of the Question, the communication of the War Office to the London County Council of 15th January expressed clearly the intention of the Army Council as a matter of policy to afford to the public in the future, as in the past, all the facilities consistent with the exigencies of the military service. No further action was therefore required by the communication from the London County Council of 14th April beyond the usual acknowledgment.

Army Cordite.

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can now state the quantity of cordite known to contain mercuric-chloride which has been issued from Government factories during the last twelve months.

Mr. HALDANE: No cordite containing mercuric-chloride has been issued from Government factories. The amount of cordite in the land service which is known to contain mercuric chloride is 85 tons. No further information is available.

Transvaal Gold Law.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government have received a reply to their communication to the Governor of the Transvaal on the subject of the draft Gold Law of that Colony, especially in respect of Sections 127 and 128 thereof, under which special disabilities are to be imposed upon coloured persons, including British-Indians.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Colonel Seely, Liverpool, Abercromby): No, Sir. The communication was made by mail, and there has not yet been time for a reply to be received.

Transvaal Local Government Bill.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the draft Local Government Bill of the Transvaal; whether the Bill restores town regulations which were in vogue under the Kruger *régime*, forbidding any coloured person, irrespective of race, to use the footpaths, and excluding natives and Asiatics from the tramcars; and, if so, will he say if he proposes to take any action in the matter.

Colonel SEELY: No, Sir. The draft has not yet reached the Colonial Office.

Sir GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): In view of the constitutional responsibility this country has in the Transvaal and in view of the fact that a draft of this Bill has been in the hands of private citizens here for the last fortnight, can the hon. Gentleman explain the failure of the Government to receive it?

Colonel SEELY: I am afraid I cannot, on the spur of the moment. I will communicate the observations of the hon. Gentleman to those concerned.

British Indians in Cape Colony.

Sir WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the case, recently tried before Mr. Justice Maasdorp of Bapau, a British-Indian, who was domiciled in the Cape Colony prior to 1906, and who, having gone on a visit to India without having provided himself with a permit authorising him temporarily to absent himself from the Colony, is now, upon his return, threatened with expulsion; and, if so, what action he proposes to take.

Colonel SEELY: Yes, Sir. I understand that the Indian failed to avail himself of the means provided in the Act for protecting existing rights, and is liable, therefore, to exclusion from the Colony because he cannot comply with the general requirements of the law. The Judge, I observe, suggested that the Minister should consider whether some indulgence might not be granted on the ground of misunderstanding and the Cape Government will no doubt give due weight to this suggestion. The Secretary of State will inquire what decision has been arrived at in the matter.

Georgetown (British Guiana) Free Library.

LORD EDMUND TALBOT (Sussex, Chichester): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the recent ceremony of the laying of the first stone of a free library at Georgetown, British Guiana, and to the fact that this ceremony took place with full Masonic rites, thereby preventing the attendance of the Roman Catholics and causing them great offence; whether he is aware that the majority of the population are Roman Catholic and largely Portuguese, and that a breach of the peace, owing to the ill-feeling aroused, was only prevented by the moderation and control of the Catholic authorities; whether he is aware that many influential members of the Masonic body and of the non-Catholic portion of the community abstained from attending the ceremony as a mark of sympathy with their Catholic fellow colonists; and whether, under these circumstances, the Secretary of State will convey to the Governor an expression of regret that precautions were not taken to consider the feelings of the Roman Catholic population, and request that, in his capacity as president of the library committee, he will endeavour to see that in the future management of the library fair consideration shall be given to their position as tax and ratepayers.

COLONEL SEELY: The attention of the Secretary of State has been drawn to the ceremony in question, and he has received a protest from the Roman Catholic Bishop of the Colony; but it is not strictly correct to say that the attendance of Roman Catholics was prevented, since the Mayor of Georgetown, himself a Roman Catholic, was on the library committee, and other Roman Catholics attended the function. Nor is it the case that the majority of the population are Roman Catholics; it must be remembered that the Europeans form only a small proportion of the inhabitants. The Governor had no reason to anticipate a breach of the peace on the occasion of the ceremony, and none in fact occurred; and the protest of the Roman Catholics was received too late to admit of a change in the arrangements. The Secretary of State is convinced that there was no intention on the part of the Governor to give offence to any religious body, and he sees no reason for conveying any such censure or instruction to the Governor, who only acted provisionally as chairman of the committee at their request pending the opening of the library. As soon as the building is ready for use its management will be entrusted to a committee representing the general taxpayers and the municipality of Georgetown.

Alcoholic Imports in the New Hebrides.

MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether large cargoes of wine, beer, and whisky have been landed by French traders on Ambrym and Aoba, islands in the New Hebrides; whether trading in intoxicating liquor is permitted under the Convention; and, if not, what steps His Majesty's Government propose to take.

COLONEL SEELY: The High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, of whom inquiry has been made by telegram, replies that he has no information as to the report mentioned in the first part of the hon. Member's Question, but thinks it incorrect in view of the regulation prohibiting the importation into the New Hebrides of any liquor containing alcohol and used for trade except with the joint permission of the British and French Resident Commissioners. The High Commissioner will inquire fully into the matter during his visit to the New Hebrides, for which he is starting on Thursday next.

Dinizulu's Salary.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if Dinizulu's official stipend has been suspended since December last, notwithstanding the refusal of His Majesty's Secretary of State to sanction such suspension; and, if so, whether the Secretary of State proposes to take any action in the matter.

COLONEL SEELY: Dinizulu's salary has been suspended. The Secretary of

State is in communication with the Natal Government on the subject.

Mr. BYLES: Has the Secretary of State made representations to the Natal Government?

Colonel SEELY: Yes, Sir; as my hon. friend will see in the Blue-book, a communication to that effect was sent to the Government.

Mr. BYLES: Did the Government take no notice of what the Secretary of State said?

Colonel SEELY: Dinizulu's salary has been suspended.

Mr. FLYNN: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the preliminary examination has lasted several months, and, in these circumstances, is not the suspension of Dinizulu's salary prejudging the trial?

Colonel SEELY: It would seem unfortunate; but my hon. friend will understand that it would be obviously inconvenient for me to make a statement now when we are actually in process of communicating with the Natal Government on the subject.

Colonial Enterprises.

*Mr. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Colonial Office has been able to obtain the services of a gentleman possessed of experience of Colonial enterprises undertaken in concert with, or under contract with, the Crown agents, to serve upon the Departmental Committee lately appointed; and, if so, whether he can announce the name of the gentleman selected?

Colonel SEELY: My hon. friend the Member for Central Hackney has, I am glad to say, accepted a seat upon the committee. Sir Ralph Moor, formerly High Commissioner for Southern Nigeria, has of course great experience of the work of the Crown agents.

*Mr. REES: I beg to ask if the services of a gentleman well acquainted with contracting under the Crown Agents could not be got to act on the Committee.

Colonel SEELY: We have done our best to find a suitable person.

Mr. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Why not select the hon. Member for Montgomery Boroughs?

King's Messengers.

Mr. JAMES HOPE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the King's messengers, charged with despatches for Constantinople, are instructed to travel *via* Berlin and Vienna; and, if so, whether, with a view to promptitude and efficiency of His Majesty's service, he will consider the advisability of altering such instructions.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir Edward Grey): No delay is caused by adopting the route *via* Berlin and Vienna, instead of that *via* Paris and Vienna, which was previously used.

Most-Favoured-Nation Treaties.

Sir GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can state when the Return moved for in the session of 1906 relating to most-favoured-nation treaties of foreign countries is likely to be issued.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: The delay has been due to the fact that the preparation of the Return entailed a considerable amount of correspondence with foreign Governments. The Return is now nearly complete, and will, my right hon. friend hopes, be laid soon.

The Sugar Convention.

Mr. VILLIERS (Brighton): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the Sugar Convention of 1902 was ratified by Act of Parliament after it had been signed by His Majesty's representative; and, if so, why it is not considered necessary now to ratify the Additional Act of 1907 by an Act of Parliament.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: After the Sugar Convention of March, 1902, had been ratified by all the participating States, a Bill was passed in the Imperial Parliament to give effect to the provisions of the Convention as regards this country.

No such legislation was necessary in the case of the Additional Act of 1907 which, while imposing no further liabilities on His Majesty's Government, frees them from certain obligations which had existed under the Convention.

Mr. VILLIERS: What line of defence would the hon. Gentleman recommend to the members of his Party who are endeavouring in the country to vindicate free trade now that the Government have relinquished the principles of free trade?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The Government cannot be expected to supply arguments for its followers.

Russian Tea Duties.

*Mr. REES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information regarding the proposed abrogation by the Russian Government of the increased duties on Ceylon and Indian teas.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: My right hon. friend understands that it was officially announced in St. Petersburg on Friday last that the Council of Ministers had approved the repeal of the surtax from 1st September new style.

Van Disturbances.

Mr. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information respecting the recent disturbances in the city and province of Van.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: There was recently a disturbance in the Armenian quarter of Van. The latest information is that a search was instituted and about a dozen of the principal revolutionaries were captured without any fighting.

Persia.

Mr. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His Majesty's Government contemplate taking any measures, in concert with the Government of Russia, having as their object the strengthening of the means of control and defence at present possessed by Persia in her frontier regions.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: As the hon. Member is already aware, the maintenance of the integrity of Persia is one of the principal objects of the recently signed Anglo-Russian Convention. My right hon. friend trusts that no special measures may be required to secure the application of this principle; but if ever this anticipation proves to be wrong, a public announcement that measures are contemplated may very likely be the most certain method of putting obstacles in the way of measures being taken.

Russian Military Operations on the Persian Frontier.

Mr. LYNCH: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information respecting the military operations now being conducted by Russia on the Russo-Persian frontier; whether demands for compensation have been made by the Russian general to the tribal headsmen of the frontier districts; and, if the Answer to this Question be in the affirmative, whether he will make friendly representations to the Russian Government with a view to securing that any such claims may be made direct to the central Government at Teheran.

Mr. J. A. PEASE: For some years past, a number of tribesmen, Persian subjects, have been settled on Russian territory and have continually plundered their Russian neighbours and driven off their cattle. The Russian Government have made constant representations, both locally to the Persian frontier authorities and at Teheran to the Persian Government, with a view to put a stop to these depredations, but without any effect; and finally, after several Russian frontier guards and soldiers and one officer had been killed by the brigands, and many more wounded, it was found necessary to despatch a military expedition to restore order in the district, and if necessary expel the marauding Persian settlers by force. The Russian general in command of the force has demanded from the Governor-General of Tabriz an indemnity for the loss of Russian life and property. Representations with the same object have also been made by the Russian Legation at Teheran to the Persian Government with the result that the

Persian *Charge d'Affaires* at St. Petersburg has asked for a delay of fifteen days in which to satisfy the Russian demands. This request has been agreed to.

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): Can the right hon. Gentleman state the amount of the indemnity demanded?

MR. J. A. PEASE: Not without notice.

Old-Age Pensions.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will publish the figures on which he based his statement in the House on the introduction of the Budget that the Government had decided to reject the sliding scale as a basis for granting old-age pensions.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): The figures bearing on this matter are very conjectural, and the decision of the Government was come to, not merely upon the evidence of figures, but upon a general review of the complexities and anomalies which a sliding scale might introduce.

*MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon) I beg to ask the Prime Minister in reference to old-age pensions in Germany, whether the German old-age and invalid pensions came into force under the Acts of 22nd June, 1889, and 12th July, 1899; whether under the latter of these two Acts, with very few exceptions, the whole working population of Germany become members of the invalid and old-age pension funds; whether any person coming under these Acts has a right to an old-age pension from his seventieth year, and to an invalid pension from the time when his capacity for work is reduced to one-third owing to old-age, illness, or accident; whether these two kinds of pensions are intimately connected, and are both regarded as old-age pensions in Germany; and can he state the total number of such pensions in existence on 1st January, 1907.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: As the right hon. Gentleman states, there is a close connection under the German law between pensions for invalidity and old age. Invalidity pensions are, however, only granted after a careful inquiry into the circumstances of the claimant and may be withdrawn when the disability ceases, whereas all insured persons on reaching the age of seventy are granted a pension without further investigation. At the beginning of 1907 the number of invalidity pensions was 814,575, and of old-age pensions 125,603.

*MR. CHAPLIN: But is the original Act of June, 1889, repealed by that of July, 1899?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I cannot say without notice.

MR. HAROLD COX: Is it not a fact that the number of old-age pensions, properly so-called, is rapidly decreasing, and that the number of invalidity pensions is increasing?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE asked for notice of the Question.

Education Grant.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can give an assurance that, in the event of the proposed 47s. grant being increased in the case of Roman Catholic schools electing to contract out under the provisions of the Bill now before the House, the same advantages will be accorded to schools which are not Roman Catholic.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): I am not in a position to indicate Amendments which the Government may wish to make or accept in the Education Bill.

The Whaling Question.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has received a memorial signed by Members of Parliament interested in the fishing industry, cordially supporting the petition of the Shetland Herring and Whale Fishery Association that he will appoint a Commission of Inquiry to visit Shetland at an early date to inquire into, and report upon, the whaling question; and if he will appoint such a Commission.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): I have received the memorial referred to. I may remind my hon. friend that the Act passed last session to regulate the whaling industry has only recently come into operation and it is inexpedient to appoint a Commission of inquiry until time has been given to test the sufficiency of the regulations now imposed. I am, however, alive to the importance of the question and shall instruct the Fishery Board to cause the closest observation to be made during the current season as to the respective operations of the herring fleet and the whaling steamers on the coast of Shetland, with a view to a report upon the working of the existing Act.

Trawling in the Moray Firth.

Captain WARING (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can now state the nature of the proposals to prevent trawling by foreign vessels in the Moray Firth which it is the intention of the Government to submit to the foreign Powers.

Captain ARTHUR MURRAY (Kincardineshire): At the same time may I ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state what steps have been taken by the Government with a view to preventing foreign trawlers from carrying on operations in the Moray Firth?

Mr. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): And may I also ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has received a copy of a resolution condemning the Government for its inaction in not prosecuting foreign trawlers observed fishing in the Moray Firth, which was recently passed by a representative meeting at Inverness; and what action he is taking with regard to the matter, in view of the dissatisfaction which at present exists.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I have received resolutions referred to by my hon. friend the Member for Elgin and Nairn. My hon. friends may be assured that this subject is receiving the close attention of the Government. Definite proposals are being prepared on which it is intended to base communications with the foreign Governments interested.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when the preparation will be completed? It has been a long time in hand.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I cannot at present.

Education (Scotland) Bill.

Mr. GULLAND (Dumfries Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in view of the intricacy of the financial clauses of the Education (Scotland) Bill and the vagueness of the various charges upon the education fund, he will fix and state an annual maximum sum for the purposes mentioned in Clause 14 (1), so that the various educational authorities may be able to form some judgment as to how their financial position will appear after the passage of the Bill.

Mr. SINCLAIR: Any limit so fixed would necessarily have to be higher than the present necessities of the case require, and calculations based upon that limit would be misleading. I shall, of course, however, endeavour in the course of discussion to give all assistance possible towards forming an estimate of the sums which will be allocated to the various district funds.

Mr. GULLAND: Can we have the information before the discussion comes on?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I will do my best.

The Vatersay Squatters.

Mr. COCHRANE (Ayrshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, since he declined to give to Lady Gordon Cathcart, under The Trespass Act, 1865, the co-operation of the Crown authorities in maintaining law and order, his attention has been called to the fact that, in 1891, in similar circumstances in the Lews, the Law Officers advised that the Trespass Act of 1865 was applicable; whether it was, in point of fact, applied in that case; and whether he intends to follow this precedent and practice in the case of the Vatersay squatters.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: May I also ask the Lord Advocate if, since 1890, there have been any cases analogous to the recent difficulties in Vatersay where the Law Officers have advised and the Courts have held that the provisions of the Trespass Act should be enforced?

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL asked if it was in order to state in a Question and Answer the nature of advice given by the Law Officers of the Crown, which should be treated as confidential?

MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is free to decline to answer the Question if he chooses.

THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. THOMAS SHAW, Hawick Burghs): The only occasion upon which the application of the Act of 1865 to circumstances in any way analogous to the Vatersay case was in 1891 when after much difference of opinion a prosecution was instituted before the sheriff, but the question of its competency was not determined nor were the accused even represented by a law agent. The general practice and the law as laid down by the highest authorities has been to deal with such incidents by civil process. I refer to my answer on this subject on 6th April last. The law and practice has been followed in the present case and the whole incidents are now *sub judice*.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): May I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he thinks it right to ask the House to conclude the general discussion on the Budget this evening, having regard to the fact that we have not only large general questions raised still to debate, but, especially the question of the repeal of the sugar duty, which is causing a great deal of trouble to the trade, and many Members are desirous of making representations to the right hon. Gentleman on the subject. It would be very inconvenient.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. The right hon. Gentleman is not entitled to make a speech.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Then I will ask would it not be more convenient not to mix that subject up with the general discussion on the Budget?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said the Prime Minister answered a similar Question last week and he thought satisfied the House with his reasons for asking it to conclude the debate that night. In addition to the debate on the Budget Resolutions that day there would be a further opportunity of discussing the repeal of half the sugar duty on the following day on the Report stage. On the Second Reading of the Budget next week the same topic could be again discussed, and certain of the Resolutions could be further discussed in the Committee stage. With regard to reserving the question of the sugar duty for separate discussion, he thought it desirable that there should be a general debate on the features of the Budget as a whole, but that was a matter that was entirely in the hands of the House and the Government were not responsible for it.

PATENTS AND DESIGNS BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 239.]

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Arthur Augustus William Harry Ponsonby, esquire, for the Stirling District of Burghs.

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 240.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (WAYS AND MEANS).

Motion made, and Question put, "That the Proceedings of the Committee of Ways and Means, if under consideration at Eleven o'clock this night, be not interrupted under the

Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

The House divided:—Ayes, 276; Noes, 72. (Division List No. 103.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Branch, James
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Brunner, Rt Hn Sir J. T (Cheshire
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Ffrench, Peter
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.)
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Kenna, Rt. Hon. Reginald
M'Micking, Major G.
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Masterman, C. F. G.
Meagher, Michael
Menzies, Walter
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Murray, Capt. Hn A C. (Kincard)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Brien, William (Cork)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.

Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, J.Wynford(Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Reddy, M.
Redmond, JohnE. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson,Sir G Scott(Bradf'rd
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Sears, J. E.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehy, David
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn.A.Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Tennant,SirEdward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G.R.(Wolverhampton)
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Ward, W.Dudley(Southampton
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Wason,Rt.Hn.E(Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A Pease.

NOES.

Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arnold-Forster, Rt.Hn.Hugh O
Ashley, W. W.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(City Lond.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bottomley, Horatio
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, Rt. HnJ.A.(Worc
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim,S)
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gordon, J.
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy,Laurence(Kent,Ashford
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Heaton, John Henniker
Helmsley, Viscount
Hope, James Fitzalan(Sheffield
Hunt, Rowland
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee,Arthur H.(Hants,Fareham
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long, Rt. Hn.Walter(Dublin,S)
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Moore, William
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick P.
Remnant, James Farquharson
Roberts, S.(Sheffield, Ecclesall)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield,Sir Berkeley GeorgeD.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W.Mitchell-(Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Viscount Valentia.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

Income-Tax.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Income-tax shall be charged for the year beginning the sixth day of April, nineteen hundred and eight, at the rate of one shilling in the pound."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): The Prime Minister informed me of his inability to be present with us to-day, being detained by public duties in another place. I greatly regret that, because I am bound to refer, not merely to the general scheme which he has propounded, but with more particularity to some of the statements he made in the course of his Budget statement. When I followed the right hon. Gentleman immediately after his Budget statement was concluded, I felt it to be unfair to myself, and scarcely respectful to him, to attempt any full criticism of the scheme which he had propounded. I made some few observations, and with one exception subsequent reflection and consideration have only confirmed me in the opinions which I then expressed. For better or for worse I think that everyone will admit that this is a momentous Budget. It is a Budget which marks a new departure in our finance and which is equally important for what it does and for what it leaves undone. What it does is to start in this country a scheme of State-aided old-age pensions, and as I said in the few observations I made the other day, that undertaking is one which, I think, meets with almost universal goodwill in this House, for the question of a better provision for the old age of our people is one that has increasingly exercised the minds of all people who are interested in social progress. It has drawn to it the attention and the labour of not merely many of the most distinguished men in all sections of the House, but of a great number of labourers in the social field outside the House. Therefore I quite agree with the Government in thinking that the time has come when it is necessary for them to show an early intention to deal with the question. At the same time, I express my regret that the House is forced into consideration of it without being in possession of the results of the inquiry which is now nearing its close by the Royal Commission on the Poor Law. It was only this session that the Prime Minister alleged the fact that that Commission was at work, and would shortly report, as sufficient reason for not attempting this year to deal in any form with the question of unemployment and the unemployed. I am bound to say that if that was a sufficient reason for leaving that question untouched in the present session, it is at least an equally forcible reason for not at this moment starting an old-age pension scheme without any knowledge as to what is to become of our Poor Law in the course of the next twelve months. One thing is certain, and that is that the Poor Law and its administration has got to be recast; that we have got, in and through the Poor Law, to differentiate in a way we have never done before between the able-bodied unemployed and those unemployed who, by reason of their unemployment, come on the Poor Law for poor relief owing to unfitness, to illness, and to old age. I confess that it is extraordinarily difficult to discuss the question of old-age pensions reasonably or satisfactorily when we know that there are impending vast changes in the Poor Law, the effect and nature of which is hidden from us. The Government felt that they could not delay and they have propounded a scheme this year, and in the course of my speech I wish to make some observations upon it. But first of all I would like to make some observations on the general financial position of the country as disclosed by the Budget. I said that the Budget was remarkable for what it did, but even more remarkable for what it does not. What is our position at the present time? We have had for nearly two and a half years in power a Government and a Party pledged to reduce expenditure, and who on platform after platform in the country, having denounced their predecessors as extravagant and wasteful, have undertaken to reduce the expenditure of the country within more manageable limits. (Ministerial cheers.) I am glad to see I have the assent of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and that I have described correctly the attitude they took up in the country. But what have they done to fulfil that undertaking? The expenditure has not been reduced.

An HON. MEMBER (on the Ministerial Benches): The Debt has been reduced.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I will come to the Debt. Does the hon. Gentleman not understand the difference between the interest on Debt and the ordinary expenditure of the country? The charge for the Debt is exactly what it was when I left office, and stands at the figure at which I myself fixed it. The expenditure is not at the figure at which I left it. On the Supply services it is over two millions higher than when I left office, and that is the result of two and a half years' hard work by this Administration of all the talents, pledged before all things to reduce expenditure and to show how much more cheaply they could do the work of the country. When we find that the Prime Minister in his Budget of this year has to estimate the expenditure of the Supply services at very nearly 112 millions sterling and a total expenditure of 153 millions, we may take it that the clap-trap which served on popular platforms before the general election is exploded. It may be taken as an admitted fact that, while you can reduce a little here or there, you cannot make any great permanent reductions in the scale of the expenditure in which our country is involved. But that is not all. The day when you might look for reductions has gone by. What you have now to look forward to is not reductions, but immense and very early increases. The Prime Minister, by introducing his old-age pension scheme, has started us on a path which everyone will admit must lead in the immediate future to very great expenditure, and as the years go on must tend constantly to increase our expenditure. From a scheme of this kind once put in force there is no turning back and we should not desire to turn back if we could. There is no turning back, because on every side, almost universally throughout the country, there is this desire, that better provision should be made for old age. Nobody wants to go back, but nobody pretends that this scheme is complete. The Prime Minister has not provided the means for paying for the scheme. It is only the first step on the path we have got to tread, and before we place old-age pensions in a satisfactory condition the estimate of expenditure which the Prime Minister gave to the House will have to be doubled, trebled, or even quadrupled. What has the Prime Minister done? He has drawn a bill for £6,000,000. He expects to have to meet £1,200,000 within the present year. For that he has made provision. For the other £4,800,000 he has made no provision at all. Happy is the position of a Chancellor of the Exchequer who is able to make a Budget statement when he has already laid down the burden of that office, and can introduce large and costly reforms, leaving to others the obligation to foot the bill which he has drawn. Still, that is not all. It is not only on old-age pensions that the Budget of next year is going to show a much larger expenditure than the Budget of this year. Take the case of the Navy. It is admitted by the late Secretary to the Admiralty that if we did not lay down a single new ship of any class or kind whatever in the next financial year the Naval Estimates would still have to increase by between one and a half and two millions above the figure of this year. But we all know that we have got to lay down new ships. We have the definite pledge of the Prime Minister that, as long as he is responsible, nobody is to be allowed to challenge the two-Power standard, and that if foreign shipbuilding is carried on as rapidly as there is every reason to expect, we shall not only lay down the extra number of ships necessitated by that programme, but will make such progress with them next year that our supremacy shall be maintained in point of time and numbers. At the lowest computation we have to look forward to the Navy Estimates exceeding those of the present year by some £4,000,000. It is for that reason that I and my friends have thought the Government extremely unwise in paring their Naval Estimates so close this year. I should like to say that everything that has come to my knowledge since the discussions on the Estimates has convinced me not only that we must have a great programme of battleships next year, but that we must do a great deal more than we are doing with the minor ships of the Fleet, especially with small cruisers and torpedo-boats. It is not as if the ships were efficient; they are worn out through age. You cannot send them to sea and keep them at sea, because they shake themselves to pieces. I am speaking of destroyers twelve or fifteen years old. They cannot stand a severe test under war-like conditions, and if you attempted to keep them at sea you would soon find your docks blocked by these vessels coming in to be repaired. We have, practically, nearly

£5,000,000 additional for old-age pensions and £4,000,000 for the Navy. Then what am I to allow for education? £1,500,000 is the estimate of the Government. The Vote for the Education Bill is obscured from us; we do not know what measure will eventually pass; but we can say this, and it is fair comment, that if anything approaching the Government Bill is to pass the increased contribution from the Exchequer will have to be not less than £1,500,000. Speeches made from the Government Bench suggest that if the Irish Members are to be bought off they can have another £500,000 for the asking. Very great efforts have been made by the Secretary of State for War to reduce the Army Estimates, and I have no doubt that both the late and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer are putting all the pressure they can upon the right hon. Gentleman for that purpose. He has had a certain amount of success, but how has he succeeded? He has made his saving by destroying the existing Army before he has anything to replace it. His savings are due to the fact that he has destroyed the Regulars without having brought the Territorial Army into being. This I do know, that if the Territorial Army scheme succeeds, and if the right hon. Gentleman by that interminable flood of speeches which he is pouring into the Volunteers all over the country to gain a new Territorial Army succeeds, those Estimates cannot be reduced. They must grow. The only chance he has of getting his reduction is by failure to recruit. I make no estimate of the growth of ordinary expenditure for education, owing to the natural growth of population and the attendance in the schools, or the ordinary growth of general expenditure. I will assume that that can be set off against the ordinary growth of revenue. What, therefore, have you got? £4,000,000 increase for the Navy, £1,500,000 for education, and £4,800,000 for old-age pensions. You have liabilities admitted by the Government to be tangible falling upon us next year to the amount of £9,000,000, and for that you make not one farthing provision. I say nothing of other legislative projects which you may or may not have in view. An Irish Council Bill has been before Parliament which proposed that there should be an Exchequer grant of £600,000, I think, to the new council thus established in Ireland, and if the declarations are to be followed by any practical results and we are to have some further scheme of Home Rule, the first thing that will be required in order to put an Irish Parliament or council on its legs will be a new draft on the Exchequer. It is one of the most extraordinary things in this Imperial Parliament that while we sit here year after year complaining of the waste of expenditure on Irish government, whenever we see a new project put forward for the government of that country it has to be accompanied by an increased grant from the Exchequer. We may, however, assume that the declarations at Manchester were mere expressions of platonic affection and that we shall not be called upon for anything in regard to them next year. Still, we have to face an extraordinary expenditure of £10,000,000, and the Government have not looked about for any fresh source of revenue for these new liabilities, but are abandoning the resources that now exist. The Prime Minister made a suggestion about the dead-weight Debt which he offered to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. His suggestion was that the right hon. Gentleman should raid the Sinking Fund. A great deal was said last year about economy of administration, but nothing was done. A great deal was said at the last election about the necessity for reducing the Debt, and yet it is left to the Prime Minister of the party which prided themselves so much on their financial integrity to propose that the Sinking Fund should be raided in order to find the means for his remissions of taxation. In that the right hon. Gentleman justified himself by what Mr. Goschen did in 1889. In 1889 Mr. Goschen was carrying or had just carried through his great conversion scheme by which he made an immediate saving of £1,500,000 on the National Debt, and he proposed to reduce the fixed charge for the reduction of debt by £1,000,000, so that instead of lessening the provision for the reduction of debt he actually increased it by £500,000. He reduced the fixed debt charge by

£1,000,000 and increased the Sinking Fund by £500,000. That is the Prime Minister's precedent. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer says there is another precedent which would have been a good deal more to the point, I agree with him in thinking that the Prime Minister had a precedent which he might have used to much greater effect, instead of which he uses one that breaks in his hand. Hon. Gentlemen who advised him in this matter were so little careful to look up precedents that they chose a year when Mr. Goschen, instead of reducing the provision for the reduction of debt, increased it by £500,000. That was his first excuse. The second was that the Government had gone a long way in the last three years towards reducing the National Debt. So they had, but more by accident than by design. The Prime Minister spoke of the sacrifices and efforts which he and his friends had made. What efforts had they made?

MR. GUEST (Cardiff District): £29,500,000.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): Are you going to deal now with the 1899 precedent?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I shall be ready to deal with that when the Prime Minister founds himself upon it. At present he founds himself upon the reduction by Mr. Goschen, not of the Sinking Fund, but of the fixed debt charge. In the meantime I will continue my observations as to what the present Government has done in the way of the reduction of debt, and ask what sacrifice or efforts the Prime Minister has made. What has he added to the Sinking Fund beyond what was provided by his predecessors? He has been fortunately situated. He entered on his inheritance with a surplus; he was more fortunate than his predecessor who inherited a heavy deficit. He has had surpluses in subsequent years; and times of easy finance. What has he done to increase the provision that is made for the reduction of Debt? Nothing. He added £500,000 temporarily one year and he added £1,500,000 temporarily last year.

MR. GUEST: That was not accidental.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: No, that was intentional. But before the year was out he took away with one hand what he gave with the other. In the first year he took £500,000 off the Sinking Fund for the purposes of the Secretary for War in regard to barracks. In the second year he seized another £500,000 for a similar purpose, and this year £600,000 for the completion of public works. Therefore, if the right hon. Gentleman added £1,500,000 to the Sinking Fund, he has subtracted £1,500,000, and, therefore, has done nothing beyond what was left by his predecessors. The right hon. Gentleman was really not quite fair in his comparison, although I do not think he intended to be uncharitable to his unfortunate predecessor. He said that in the three years 1903–6, the Debt had been reduced by £27,500,000, and in the three years 1906–9 by £46,000,000. But there were one or two factors which the right hon. Gentleman forgot to mention. In the first place there was the singularly low price of Consols, that not even "the wasteful finance" of the late Government could reduce the price of Consols, and accordingly, whatever money the right hon. Gentleman had, went further than money went under his predecessors. But that is not all. He has been fortunate in having had prosperous years with large surpluses. The first of these surpluses was £3,500,000, inherited from his predecessor. The right hon. Gentleman said he was very grateful to me for that £3,500,000, but that he had excluded it from his calculations. No, he has not. It is in the £46,700,000 for which he takes credit to himself. In addition to that £3,500,000, nearly another £10,000,000 for which he takes credit was accidental and not intentional, and not the result of under-estimated receipts and over-estimated expenditure. Therefore, out of £47,000,000 in these prosperous years, you have to take about £13,000,000 before you get the real amount which the right hon. Gentleman intended to devote to these purposes. But that is not all. The right hon.

Gentleman and his friends are accustomed to take credit for having put an end to the system of borrowing for naval and military works. I am quite ready to admit that the particular works included may be open to challenge, as not involving that permanent increase which entitles him to borrow upon them. But I am absolutely unable to draw a distinction in principle between borrowing, as the right hon. Gentleman did, for telegraph construction, or seizing on the Sinking Fund instead of creating a new debt for the completion of public buildings, and using the same resources for great naval and military works of permanent utility. If the right hon. Gentleman is able to present naval and military estimates as moderate as those he has presented out of taxation, it is because he enjoys the result of the operations of the Naval and Military Works Act. But he, too, is continuing to borrow. What has he done? He has said that no further work shall be included in those Acts. That had already been said in regard to naval works by the late Administration. The right hon. Gentleman has extended that to military works, and he has transferred a certain proportion of the charges which would have fallen under the Naval Works Act to the Vote; but he is still taking advantage of the large borrowing powers obtained by his predecessors, and he is still creating fresh annuities for works being executed. That is not all. He is living on capital to the tune of £1,000,000 a year, because there were surplus naval stores to the amount of £3,000,000 which they have exhausted very rapidly. Next year there will be no surplus, and the full charge will come on the Vote. What are the conclusions to be drawn? A great and growing expenditure, liabilities foreseen and practically announced to the House to the gigantic amount of £10,000,000, with absolutely no provision made for them. I see that my noble friend, Lord St. Aldwyn, said in the other House a day or two ago that this was unsound finance. It is, with a Budget such as, I think, has never been presented to this House before, in its reckless disregard of obligations incurred, and its total failure to do anything to meet them—it is under these circumstances that the Prime Minister invites the Chancellor of the Exchequer to raise this income. The right hon. Gentleman asked me if I would say anything about the earlier precedents which I might find in the more cautious action taken in 1887.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: No; 1899, when there was a reduction of the Sinking Fund by £23,000,000.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I am not prepared to say anything about that just now, because I set myself to answer the speech of the Prime Minister, and I frankly admit that the precedent to which the right hon. Gentleman calls my attention I had not noticed. Speaking from memory, if I remember rightly, at that time Consols stood at 110 or 112, and I am not sure that they had not reached 114; at any rate they were standing very high. Is there no difference between reducing the Sinking Fund at a time when every £100 of Consols purchased might cost £110 and reducing the Sinking Fund at a time when every £100 of Consols can be got for £80? I say there is a very great difference. As I am reminded by my hon. friend near me, at that time the National Debt was £150,000,000 less than it is now. I do not think that there is any parallel between those cases. Let me go back to the earlier case of Mr. Goschen. Was there any parallel then? Consols were not standing so high, it is true. What was the income-tax? What was the general level of taxation? You have in this country two great reserve in case of war. Gentlemen who are anxious to reduce our naval and military expenditure are never tired of telling us that our financial reserve is, at least, as important a factor in our defensive position as either our Army or our Navy. I think that is a slightly exaggerated way of putting it, because with an efficient Army or Navy our financial reserves would never have time to come into play. I admit the great importance of these financial reserves. They consist of the Sinking Fund and the income-tax. Both of these afford a great reserve for war or for sudden emergencies. But with a low Sinking Fund and a high income-tax then you have a poor and small reserve. When Mr. Goschen performed the operation which the Prime Minister, I am sorry to say, inaccurately described, the income-tax was at 6d., but to-day it is at 1s. When Mr. Goschen made his earlier raid on the Sinking Fund, the income-tax was reduced to 7d., the tea duty was 4d., and there was no sugar duty at all. If he had a smaller margin in respect of the Sinking Fund and its reduction, he had a greater reserve in the unused taxable capacity of the imposts already in force. Now you have a high income-tax and you propose to make a low Sinking Fund. That is perilous finance. It is an easy thing to do, and earn the cheap and quick approval of the moment, but it leaves your successors in time of emergency and national danger to bear the strain which we ought to be men enough to bear in times of peace. I say that under the circumstances it was the duty of the Government to provide new resources. Instead of that they dissipate the old ones. At a time when they are establishing a non-contributory old-age pensions scheme, they remit rather more than half of the sugar duty. But the new expenditure is for the benefit exclusively of the poor of this country. It is not intended to reach any of those who pay direct taxes, whether income-tax or death duties. But the Prime Minister wishes to persuade those who contribute neither to the income-tax nor to the death duties, those whose contribution is made through indirect taxation, that they can both have their cake and eat it, because when they eat it they can get a new one which comes from the direct taxes. I do not think that is very wise finance; I do not think that it is very honest finance. I am quite willing to join any body of opinion in this House in calling upon the rich and more well to do to join in schemes for the improvement of the less well to do in this country, and to contribute according to their means to these schemes, but I am not prepared to say that any class of the community may demand social reforms, or schemes that they call social reforms, without contributing anything towards the cost. They cannot or ought not to contribute the whole; their individual contributions must be necessarily less; but where the benefit goes to the poor, to say that they shall contribute nothing is only to teach them to look for boons of this kind without making any effort or contribution of their own. That it seems to me is not honest; it is a corrupting influence in our political system which once entered upon will lead you very far and involve very grave difficulties. ["No, no."] I notice hon. Gentlemen opposite express a good deal of dissent from that doctrine, but I fortify myself by the opinion of the Prime Minister, expressed as recently as January last in Lancashire. Speaking on the establishment of a system of old-age pensions, he said that—

> "So far as it is drawn from taxation, it must be a scheme to which all classes of the community, including the working classes, make a just and adequate contribution."

That is all I ask, but I do ask that. Where in the present Budget scheme, where in the present old-age pension scheme that the right hon. Gentleman has announced, with its liability this year of £1,500,000, and next year £6,000,000, and in the years to come £10,000,000 or £20,000,000, is the just and adequate contribution allowed for, or which he says working classes ought to make? I invite the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this connection to tell us what is the contribution of a working man who is a teetotaller and not an income-tax payer, to the taxation of the country. I want the question answered in two forms. I take, first, the teetotaller who is a smoker, and who we will assume drinks his share of tea, coffee and cocoa in the next place, the teetotaller who is also a total abstainer from tobacco, and I should like to know what is the contribution which either of these men, paying indirect taxes only, makes to the general expenditure of the State, by which, after all, as far as you can split it up and say that any portion of it is more for the benefit of one class than another, he is the greatest beneficiary of all. I do not imagine that the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Prime Minister desires that any class of the community should escape all taxation whatever. There are Gentlemen below the gangway who do, but that view has not yet been adopted, I think, by any Member on the Treasury

Bench except the First Lord of the Admiralty in an *obiter dictum*, to which it would, perhaps, be unwise to hold him. But what is the contribution of that man apart from his indulgence in alcoholic liquor? I had a calculation worked out when I was Chancellor of the Exchequer. I do not think it was an exorbitant contribution then, and certainly it is a very much smaller contribution now. Turning from that side of the Budget, with its enormous liabilities and its absence of provisions to meet them, I come to some observations that I have to make upon the old-age pension scheme itself. As I have said, it is obviously incomplete, but I do not make that a ground of accusation against it. It is incomplete in respect of age. I do not think anyone will be content to rest indefinitely on old-age pensions beginning at so late an age as seventy. But I make no complaint of the Prime Minister having fixed on that age at which to begin, and I do not wish anyone to suppose that I do. But I regret, and I repeat the regret that I expressed on the first day of this debate, that he has ruled out at once all consideration of contributory schemes. I said at that time that I was afraid that, having set before the country a non-contributory scheme, the right hon. Gentleman had made any contributory scheme impossible in the future. I think, possibly, there I was over-hasty. I think it may be that in order to obtain the greater benefits beginning at an earlier age, which we all desire to see, the mass of our fellow countrymen will be ready to come in to a compulsory national contributory scheme. Undoubtedly the choice made by the right hon. Gentleman has increased the difficulty; still I do not abandon the hope. And when I hear it said that this is an impossibility, I look at what the working people have done by voluntary contributions—for instance, for the Hospital Saturday collections, which I do not think brought in very great funds at first, but which developed along the line of a compulsory levy on the wages in a factory voted by the men working in the factory themselves, and is producing in Birmingham, for instance, thousands of pounds a year for the benefit of our great charities. If workmen are willing to tax themselves in their factories and authorise their employer to deduct 1d. or 2d. a week from their wages in order to maintain hospitals, I do not despair of the same thrifty, independent, industrious people being ready and anxious to make some direct contribution to a better provision for their old age. The Prime Minister did not attempt to argue this question. He waived it aside with a couple of references. The first was to the German scheme in regard to which the right hon. Gentleman made an amazing statement which has already formed the subject of Question and Answer between my right hon. friend beside me and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He said that in Germany after thirty years only 126,000 persons were in receipt of old-age pensions. But the right hon. Gentleman has not taken the trouble to inform himself as to what the German system is, and I do not think that the right hon. Gentleman's condemnation of it will carry conviction. Under the German scheme the old-age pension given as such is the exception and not the rule. It is a transitional stage that is passing away. The great mass of the people who receive pensions are getting them before they reach the age of seventy. The German scheme provides for a pension to be payable at the time a man ceases to be able to maintain himself —when he is invalided and unable to work. Thus the great mass of the German pensions are given not under the name of old-age pensions but under the name of invaliding pensions; and instead of the total of pensionability payable under the German scheme being as the Prime Minister apparently thought, and as his words would have led any Member to suppose, 126,000, that is almost exactly the number of new pensions granted in 1907 alone, and the number of people actually in enjoyment of pensions is over 962,000. For anybody to talk of old-age pensions in Germany without taking account of the invaliding pension is, I am certain the Chancellor of the Exchequer will allow, the moment his attention is called to the matter, absolutely to ignore the essential features of the case, and, not intentionally of course, to give a very misleading account of the state of affairs. Then the right hon. Gentleman made a reference to a speech of my right hon. friend the Member for

West Birmingham, delivered in 1899, and said that if anybody still had a lingering affection for a contributory scheme he advised him to read that speech. It is quite true my right hon. friend said in that speech that he thought the hope of a contributory scheme must be abandoned. I am generally in very full agreement with my right hon. friend, but on this occasion at least I am more sanguine, at any rate until the scheme of the Government is unfolded. I believe that there has been a distinct advance on this question since my right hon. friend spoke, and that the contributory scheme is much more possible now than at that time. My right hon. friend went on to say—

> "A universal scheme."—

—which is not the Government scheme—

> "is open to the fatal objection that it would make no distinction whatever between the provident, thrifty, industrious men and the drunkard and the spendthrift; any scheme must encourage thrift and independence, else it will do more harm than good."

What have the Government done to distinguish between the provident, the thrifty, and the industrious, and the men who are drunkards or spendthrifts? What have they done to encourage thrift and independence? As presented to the Committee, their scheme is a direct discouragement to numbers of deserving men, who are to be treated no better than the thoroughly undeserving. I repeat again that I do not want an inquisitorial test into character. I have often spoken, like many hon. Members, at public meetings on this subject, and have always on those occasions expressed my preference for a contributory scheme, and I maintain now that the Government ought to distinguish between the thrifty and the industrious, and the undeserving. I do not believe that this is an unpopular view to take of the feeling among the mass of the working people. I do not think that the working men want the idler, the spendthrift, and the drunkard to be treated in the same way as the hard-working and industrious. Whatever the State wastes on the spendthrift and the drunkard it takes away from the deserving, and by adopting a non-contributory scheme the Government have made it much more difficult to distinguish between the thrifty, and the industrious, and the other class. Besides, the Government have limited the income to 10s. a week, the possession of which is to debar any working man from obtaining a pension. I think that the limit of 10s. is too low, and I hope that before the Bill leaves the House, hon. Members will be able to alter it to something more satisfactory. It is all very well to say, as the President of the Local Government Board did, that the benefit drawn from the trade unions does not exceed, except in very few cases, 10s. a week, but there are a great many men in these unions and outside them who are most thrifty, most provident, and most deserving, who have made a double provision for themselves, and who, in addition to their trade union benefit, get some benefit from a building society, a friendly society, or the Post Office Savings Bank, or some similar institution. I think the 10s. limit is too low. Though I think that a mistake, I think it is a still greater mistake to make the 10s. a rigid limit, and not to have some kind of sliding scale. You ought to encourage thrift. The moment a man has saved an amount equal to 10s. a week, unless he can see his way to saving more than another 5s. a week all inducement to save ceases. You discourage him. What is the effect of that going to be? Of course, when a man has got 10s., unless he sees a chance of making it up to £1 his saving will cease. Something will have to be done. Those who are earning between 10s. and 15s. a week will cease to earn more than 10s. a week as soon as the Old-Age Pensions Bill becomes law. This is the case now in regard to income-tax: workmen often prefer a wage that brings them just under the scale than one which brings them just over, in order that they may be free from taxation. In the same way you would have agricultural labourers earning wages of from 12s. to 13s. a week going to their employers and saying: "Give me 10s. a week, and then I shall be 3s. a week better off." Do you want that sort of thing? What is the result of all that going to be? The result will be that, under the name of a pension, the State will be paying a contribution in wages. We shall, too, have these men earning 10s. and eligible for a pension coming in and competing with men not eligible for a pension. I admit the great difficulty of dealing with these cases, but my view is that, by fixing the limit at which the right to a pension ceases so low as 10s. the difficulty is enormously aggravated. With a limit as low as that, a 5s. pension is a much more powerful factor than if you fix the income at 20s. to begin with. By making the stopping point rigid instead of having a sliding scale, the Government directly discourage thrift, encourage tampering with wages, and encourage evasion in respect of the income hitherto received by an old person from one of his dependants. That brings me to the case of the old married couple. I speak in no unfriendly spirit, and I certainly do not wish to appear merely as attempting to outbid the Government on this question. I recognise the enormous financial difficulties, and I try to speak with a corresponding sense of responsibility, but I cannot conceive, of all the restrictions imposed by this Bill, a harsher, more cruel, or more unjustifiable restriction than the one which penalises old couples living together. I cannot conceive that the House will allow that provision to remain as it is, and I hope that, at a very early stage, we shall have an undertaking from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the provision will be modified. The Bill inflicts a double penalty on an old couple living together, for, instead of taking the income which is to deprive them of the right to a pension at twice that of the individual, the Government take it at about one third less, and, instead of paying them a pension at the full rate of 5s. each person, they reduce it to 7s. 6d. per couple. That is done, the Prime Minister says, because 10s. for two persons living together is more valuable than 5s. for a single person. I do not see that. Does the Prime Minister think a single person of seventy in receipt of a pension of 5s. is going to keep house on that in a house of his own? That is not to be hoped for or desired. What is desired is that the 5s. should make the difference with the children that they should be able to keep the old man or old woman as an honoured guest in their own house instead of shuffling him or her off to the workhouse. It would very often be much easier for a single old person to find a home with a married son or daughter than for an old couple to do it, and I think 5s. in the case of a single person would often go further than 10s. in the case of a married couple. By what right are you going to penalise old people who have lived together for many years of their lives in decency and married happiness and say that, unless they consent to separate, they shall be fined in their pension rates? The cruellest feature of the administration of the old Poor Law was, admittedly, the separation of married couples in the workhouse. And now, outside the workhouse, it is actually suggested that we should re-impose this separation upon the old couples or fine them for continuing to desire to live together. I really think it is an outrage to suggest such a proposal, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will abandon it at the earliest possible moment. It is, in my opinion, unsound finance to budget, as the Prime Minister has done, for a surplus of only £250,000, with such vast liabilities before him. I think the right hon. Gentleman has no right to give away the sugar duty when he is incurring such big gifts, but if he has a right to part with that money, then let us spend it in making the old-age pension a little more perfect. Let us give it to the old people, to whom it would be a blessing and a real boon, and not spread it over the whole community. Let us ask the community to continue to bear the charge as their contribution to the great social reform we are making, and in order that that reform may be more complete. I frankly say that I envy the right hon. Gentleman the opportunity of which he has availed himself; but in regard to the Budget as a whole, apart from old-age pensions, I can only say that the Budget is not one of which I envy the right hon. Gentleman, or one which I would have cared to produce.

*MR. ASHTON (Bedfordshire, Luton) congratulated the Prime Minister upon the introduction of his old-age pension scheme. They would all have been delighted to have seen old-age pensions started earlier than seventy years of age, but they were very grateful to the Prime Minister for making a start when they looked at the great cost. It was a great experiment, and the Government were perhaps wise in beginning at seventy instead of sixty-five. He was glad that the Prime Minister saw his way to take off the sugar duty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, he understood, was satisfied that he would be able to raise the necessary amount of taxation to carry out the old-age pensions scheme, and the House ought to be satisfied with that. This Budget would be a very great boon to the poor people of the country and also to many industries in which sugar formed the raw material. The Government were to be congratulated on the very large amount of Debt written off during the course of the last year, the amount being no less than £18,000,000. During the last five years the Debt had been reduced by £60,000,000. During the year the unfunded Debt had been reduced by £10,000,000, terminable annuities by £1,500,000 and the funded Debt by £6,500,000. The ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer had spoken of the great advantage the Prime Minister had had in having Consols so low, because he was able to buy them at a cheaper rate. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to have bought more, because last year he only bought up about £2,000,000, so that he got very little advantage out of the low price. Even this year only about £6,000,000 Consols had been bought up; in other words the right hon. Gentleman had employed his available funds only to the extent of about one-third in dealing with Consols. He thought the time had come when the Chancellor of the Exchequer might take upon himself to deal more with Consols than with the unfunded Debt. During the war they increased the amount of the unfunded Debt to a large extent, amounting to something like £70,000,000 or £90,000,000, and it was very desirable that that Debt should be reduced, because it acted very detrimentally on the money market and locked up many of the resources which would otherwise be employed in the trade of the country. At no time ought the unfunded Debt to be a large one, and it should be kept in reserve for other liabilities. The unfunded Debt of the country now stood at a little over £40,000,000, and nearly a half of that sum was what remained still unpaid of the War Loan. The War Loan was due at the end of two years from now. Even there the Chancellor of the Exchequer might leave the Debt to be dealt with later on. During last year, speaking roughly, £6,000,000 had been paid off. That need not have been done, for, after all, if the time came when the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to deal with that loan he might well finance it by Exchequer bonds and Treasury bills. While Consols were so low he ought to have taken advantage of the time to buy them up. He thought City gentlemen would agree with him that the chances were largely that during the next few years the price of Consols would be distinctly higher than to-day. Everything was tending in that direction. They had cheap money and, unfortunately, a great easing off in trade, and when these two things occurred in combination they would always find a rise in the best class of securities. Therefore, instead of paying off obligations which already stood at par, like the War Loan and Exchequer bonds, they should turn their attention to paying off those which might rise rather than those which could not rise at all. He agreed with the right hon. Gentleman opposite in viewing with great apprehension indeed the reduction of the Sinking Fund. He did not take quite so gloomy a view on that matter as the right hon. Gentleman. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer had to find £4,500,000 next year for the old-age pension fund, and he was at the same time being robbed of £3,000,000 in the form of sugar duty, so that there was a gap to fill up of £7,500,000 or £8,000,000 at the end of the present year. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer could look forward with less apprehension than he himself did to the future at the end of this year. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer had foreshadowed a reduction of the Sinking Fund. He was not quite sure that the House, when the Prime Minister spoke, really realised what the position of the public Debt of the country was at the present moment. Before he gave out that there was to be a reduction of the Sinking Fund the right hon. Gentleman had just given some magnificent figures about the reduction of Debt, and the House was perfectly intoxicated at the amount of Debt paid off. He believed that large numbers of Members thought, after listening to the Prime Minister, that the War Debt had been reduced to the point where it was before the war took place. As a matter of fact, nothing could be further from the truth. The lowest point of the Debt was just before the Transvaal War, but at that time the dead-weight Debt of the country was, roughly speaking, £70,000,000 lower than to-day. At the end of this financial year it would still be £60,000,000 in excess of what it was just before the Transvaal War. He should have thought that the Prime Minister would have taken the figures at that date as the basis of comparison, but for another reason he took the figures of twenty years back. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that we had got back to the amount at which the Debt stood in 1889–1890. He took that year because he wished to justify himself in proposing to reduce the Sinking Fund. He said that Mr. Goschen had been able to reduce the Sinking Fund at that date, and that therefore we should be able to get back to what it was in 1889. It was perfectly true that the dead-weight Debt had got back to what it was then, but if he had taken the whole of the national liabilities he would have discovered that so far from the Debt being at the point it was at twenty years ago we were still owing about £60,000,000 more than in 1889 or 1890. Therefore, he did not think his right hon. friend was justified in giving the impression that we had come to a point where it was safe to reduce the Sinking Fund. He himself was convinced that we had not. At any rate, it should not be thought that the whole of the national liabilities were at the figure of ten years ago. The whole object of the Sinking Fund was that we should every year pay less interest and pay off more of the principal of the Debt. Sir Stafford Northcote, when he increased the Sinking Fund to £28,000,000 a year, pointed out that it would be like a snowball, so that annually we should have less interest to pay. There was no justification for stopping that process when the Debt was not at a less point than twenty years ago. He regretted very greatly indeed that a proposition of this sort had come from a Liberal Government. Liberals had prided themselves upon being the guardians of the finances of the country; they had prided themselves more than once of late years on dragging the finances of the country out of the mire into which Conservative extravagance—he was not sure that it was not incompetence—had landed them. He was not speaking on this matter simply from his own point of view. Speaking in this House on 25th April, 1887, when Mr. Goschen proposed to reduce the Debt charge, Mr. Gladstone said—

> "We in this country, with an estimated income of £1,000,000,000 a year, cannot bear to apply a sum not nearly so large as was applied for that purpose in 1860 when the wealth of this country was not, I think, more than two-thirds of what it now is. Is that a proposal worthy of the present Conservative ministry? It is in these circumstances that we are invited to shrink from the very moderate efforts we have been making to pursue this wide and broad policy supported by all our best financial authorities, of applying considerable and sensible amounts to the reduction of the National Debt."

He would ask his right hon. friend whether we were so poverty-stricken at the present moment that we should reduce the amount which we were paying for the reduction of the National Debt. We were proud to point year after year to the extraordinary prosperity of the country which had followed upon our free trade system. Why at the moment when we are so prosperous, and when our Debt was so heavy, should we talk of a reduction in the paying off of the National Debt? He would conclude with the following words of Mr. Gladstone—

> "I cannot think that serious and deliberate reflection will warrant a proceeding so inadequately corresponding to the courageous tradition of Englishmen, to the far-sighted tradition of English statesmen, or to the general interests of the British nation."

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) said the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire, in his general criticism of the finances of the country, had told the Committee that at the general election the great cry was for economy. Had that been carried out? He would like to quote in connection with that question some words used by the Prime Minister when he was introducing his first Budget. Having quoted the figures relating to the expenditure of the late Administration in the previous ten years, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "These figures appear to me to call for no comment. They speak with an eloquence which needs no rhetorical embroidery. In my opinion they make a return to more thrifty and economical administration the first and paramount duty of the Government."

Had they been successful? No. The expenditure this year on the Supply services alone was nearly two millions greater than it was in the first year of the present Administration, viz., 1905–1906. In the Civil Service alone there was an increase of £16,000,000 during the last ten years, and the increase was about £3,000,000 since the present Government came into office. Those figures were very eloquent as the present Prime Minister had said; but where was the economy which was promised to the country? The war taxation had certainly been reduced by something like £7,340,000, including part of the sugar duty. But when this Government came into power the War tax, which had been at its maximum, thirty-four or thirty millions more than the normal amount of taxation, had been reduced by the late Administration to £24,000,000. At present the war taxation stood at something like £16,000,000, the greater part of which was represented by the increase in the income-tax. When the income-tax was increased for the purposes of the war each one of the Chancellors of the Exchequer said that it should be the first, or ought to be the first, to receive relief when the war was over. Had that been done? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcester, when introducing his Budget increasing the income-tax from 11d. to 1s. in the £, said—

> "I say for myself that in my opinion it is the income-tax payer who will have the first claim to relief, and I hope the sacrifice I am now asking of him will not endure for long."

The present Prime Minister said last year—

> "In regard to the income-tax I do not hesitate to associate myself with the declarations of more than one of my predecessors that an income tax of a uniform rate of 1s. in the £ at a time of peace is impossible to justify and difficult to defend. It is a burden on the trade of the country which in the long run affects not only profits but wages . . . . From the point of view of the nation it is open to the same objection as the continuance at an abnormal figure of the floating Debt, viz., that it tends to destroy, or at anyrate to contract, a most readily available reserve, on which the State can draw in a sudden and unforeseen emergency."

They were endangering this great reserve, as they had just been told by the hon. Member for Bedfordshire. He quite agreed with the hon. Member that it was of very great importance to keep our two great reserves—the Sinking Fund at a high figure and the income-tax at a low figure, in order to be prepared to meet any time of emergency which might come to this country. As Mr. Gladstone said in his Budget speech of 1853, when speaking of the great necessity of keeping up the reserves of the country—

> "Much as may be said of the importance of an Army Reserve and a Navy Reserve, and of having your armouries and your arsenals well stored, I say this fiscal reserve is no less important; for if it be used aright, it is an engine to which you may resort, and with which, judiciously employed, if unhappily necessity arise (which may God in His mercy avert) you may again, if need be, defy the world."

That was the opinion of that great financier, Mr. Gladstone, in regard to the importance of keeping up the two great reserves. He was sorry that the Prime Minister was not present or he would have taken the opportunity of congratulating him on the speech he had made in introducing his last Budget. The right hon. Gentleman then said—

> "Last year I gave relief and substantial relief to a large class of income-tax payers. This year, therefore, it would be the natura course for the indirect taxpayers to be relieved."

Well, he thought the Prime Minister was wrong when he said he had given substantial relief to the income-tax payer. As a matter of fact, he had taken more from him. He received £1,880,000 in excess of his Budget Estimate of last year and actually £780,000 more than the sum paid the year before the alteration, viz., £32,380,000. Therefore, he was making a claim from a large and important class of income-tax payers who did not come within the scope of the relief given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year—all those who, when the income-tax was raised first to 1s. and then to 1s. 4d. bore the burden without complaint, relying on the promises given by various Chancellors of the Exchequer that they would be the first to be relieved. These people had received no relief at all. And what was the prospect of their getting relief next year? It looked as though instead of being relieved they would have to pay more. [Hon. Members on the Labour Benches: Hear, hear.] He expected that cheer to come from hon. Members below the gangway. Where was the money to come from to meet this expenditure on old-age pensions? The Chancellor of the Exchequer estimated that they would cost £6,000,000. He supposed that that was the minimum, but the probability was that they would cost a great deal more. He had taken some little interest in this question of old-age pensions, having introduced more than one Bill in the House on the subject. He would like to congratulate the Prime Minister on having faced the question, though he was afraid he must part company with him when he came to the methods by which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to deal with it. The question had been investigated by various Committees. The one which, he thought, was the most important in utility was presided over by the right hon. Member for Wimbledon. What was the problem that had to be solved? It was, to quote the Report of the Committee to which he had referred—

> "To alleviate the lot of the deserving poor, who, in the closing years of their life, through no fault are relegated either to the workhouse or inadequate Poor Law relief . . . . and at the same time to do nothing to stay that growing development in the efforts of the working classes to make provision for themselves."

The evidence with regard to what the working people in this country were doing to make provision for themselves at the present moment was most marked. During the past sixteen years the deposits in the Post Office Savings Banks had more than doubled. In the Trustees Savings Banks they had increased very largely, though they had not doubled. During the last six years the members of Friendly Societies had also increased, and their funds had increased during the five years preceding 1904 by something like £10,000,000. The problem was how could they relieve the deserving poor without interfering with the practice of economy and saving which was going on at the present moment? He was afraid that that could not be accomplished under the scheme of the Government. The only persons to be excluded from its benefit were paupers in actual receipt of Poor Law relief—indoor or outdoor; lunatics, and criminals actually under punishment. Everybody except these persons was to share in the scheme, whether they deserved it or not, whether they had led good lives and had done the best for themselves or not. He thought that that was wrong. There ought to be some discrimination between the deserving and the undeserving. In all the schemes which were at present in existence—in Denmark, France, New Zealand, New South Wales, Victoria, and Germany—there was a contribution made by the recipient, and relief was not given to those who did not deserve it. Before the right hon. Member for Wimbledon's Committee, very valuable evidence was given by Sir Henry Langley, the Chief Charity Commissioner, in regard to the schemes now administered by the Charity Commission, which had funds amounting to over £1,000,000 to administer. A question was put to Sir Henry by the Committee: "Do you find any difficulty in discriminating as to what is reasonable providence and what constitutes good character?" The reply was that so far as the Commissioners were aware there had been no considerable difficulty in practice; and he expressed the opinion that their scheme had worked satisfactorily and well. Mr. Munro, who was connected with another charity, gave similar evidence. The trustees, he said, had no difficulty in ascertaining the truth of the statements made, either through their own inquiry or in some cases through the Charity Organisation Society. He hoped, therefore, this scheme would receive some modification. It would be a grievous injury to the country if a scheme were launched which would stay the progress of economy and thrift. He noticed that the whole of the money for these pensions was to come from the Imperial Exchequer. Was that the proper course? [Cheers.] He thought that statement might be cheered, but his view, which corresponded with that of most of the Committees that had considered the subject, was that half should come from local funds in order that there should be a proper check upon the giving of the pensions. When the whole amount came from the Government, there was no inducement on the part of the pension authorities to be economical. The inducement was rather the other way—to put as many people as possible upon the national pension, in order that the local rates might be relieved of the cost of persons who would otherwise come on Poor Law relief. If half the contribution came from local funds that inducement would not exist, because the local authorities would give *pari passu*. Mr. Knollys, the head of the Department of the Local Government Board, said, in the evidence he gave before the right hon. Gentleman's Committee—

> "The serious objection to a separate and distinct grant-in-aid of pensions only is the temptation to relieve the poor rates by unduly adding to the number on the pension list to which the Government contribution would alone be made."

He would like to see an alteration made in the Government scheme by which the contribution should be made by the local authority and the State in equal proportions, and by which also the pension authorities should be representative of the local authorities, as well as of the Government. For these reasons, he hoped the Government would see their way to listen to suggested modifications when the Bill came before the House and to accept some Amendments on the lines upon which he had ventured to address the Committee.

*MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) associated himself with the protests that had been made against what was called the raid on the Sinking Fund, and said he hoped that before next year came the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have attained a higher level of financial purity. This was the more important because there seemed to be a certain amount of justice in the criticisms of the right hon. Gentleman opposite as to the amount which had been devoted by the present Ministry to the reduction of Debt. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was a fair-minded man, and he would admit that a great deal of what had been done to reduce the Debt by the present Government was due to the fortunate circumstances that the country had been extremely prosperous, and there had, in consequence, been a large amount available for Debt reduction. The Debt reduction had been really due to arrangements made before the Government came into office. His right hon. friend the Prime Minister had added altogether £2,000,000 to the New Sinking Fund, but he had allowed his colleague the Secretary of State for War to raid the Old Sinking Fund to the extent of £817,000, and a further sum of £600,000 was taken this year, for capital expenditure upon new public offices, so that the additional provision made for the reduction of Debt over and above the provision previously existing was only £583,000. They would be content with that if it were not for the fact that the Government intended to reduce the Sinking Fund in the coming year. But not until they had wiped off at least the whole of the War Debt would they be justified in reducing the Sinking Fund. The whole idea of Sir Stafford Northcote in establishing the fixed debt charge was that the rate of debt reduction should be increased annually. The Government should not slacken their efforts until they had materially raised the price of Consols. On all these grounds he hoped the Government next year would have some other proposal to make with regard to that question. What was the great merits of the Government's finance during the last three years? It was the check they had given to the loan expenditure. The principle laid down by the Prime Minister that we were not to expend for works money obtained on loan was a sound principle. If a great nation did not expend money in one direction, it would expend it in another, and therefore, it was not necessary to adopt the principle of borrowing money to spend on works and to spread the repayment over a number of years. The loan system of the Government was analogous to the hire purchase system in the case of an individual. In that case instead of buying what was wanted and paying for it, a contract was entered into to receive the goods purchased and to pay for them in a number of years. The Government, however, had not succeeded in getting rid of the loan expenditure completely. They had reduced it from £6,000,000 to just under £3,000,000. That was a considerable reduction, but he thought they might still get rid of it altogether. A large part of the loan expenditure was for telephone wires, but instead of supplying the Postmaster-General with telephone wires on the hire purchase system the House ought to insist on the telegraphs and telephones being treated on a commercial basis. The real trouble in the Government's finance was the increase of the general expenditure. On the Government side of the House all the Members were pledged to economy, but he observed that the last year for which the late Government was responsible the Exchequer expenditure was £150,413,000, while the present expenditure was £154,109,000. That was an enormous increase. In 1901 the Chancellor of the Exchequer supported the present Lord Wolverhampton, then Sir Henry Fowler, Member for Wolverhampton, and voted against the then Government on the question of the extravagance of the general expenditure. Sir Henry Fowler, referring to the whole general expenditure of the country, said it was too much, and the right hon. Gentleman agreed with him, and followed him into the lobby. The expenditure then according to Sir Henry Fowler, was £125,500,000, and this was denounced as excessive. The figure at which the expenditure now stood was £154,109,000. On the other hand the fact had to be taken into account that we were not then paying off Debt so fast as now, and that the then Government were spending more money from loans than we were now. That was to the credit of the present Government. But when he had allowed for that he found that the expenditure now was not less than £20,000,000 in excess of that which was condemned by the right hon. Gentleman in 1901. The Civil Service expenditure since the Government came into office had increased by nearly £5,000,000 a year. That was a very serious fact, in view of what Liberals had said during the general election about the absolute necessity of economy in public expenditure. The Prime Minister in his Budget speech had quite rightly taken credit to himself for what he had done in amalgamating the local taxation accounts with the Exchequer receipts. That was a very valuable reform indeed. The right hon. Gentleman added that now the finance accounts and the Estimates showed the whole expenditure. Unfortunately, that was not the case. The right hon. Gentleman left altogether out of his view the question of appropriations-in-aid, a question to which Mr. Gibson Bowles, the late Member for King's Lynn, used constantly to call attention in the House. The appropriations-in-aid amounted to a very large sum annually, to more than £6,000,000, and in addition there were payments out of gross receipts amounting to £2,000,000. Further there were large transfers from Department to Department. The system was thoroughly unsound and full of anomalies. For instance, the fees received by the National Gallery were treated as additional revenue, whilst the fees received at the Tower were treated as a set off against the expenditure at the Tower. If they went through the whole of the accounts they would find the same thing constantly occurring—items treated as revenue in one case and in other cases as appropriations-in-aid. The right hon. Gentleman's former Department, the Board of Trade, was one of the first offenders in this matter; he did not blame the right hon. Gentleman; it simply arose from the way in which the accounts were drawn up. If the right hon. Gentleman would look at the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade, he would see that the accounts were muddled up by all sorts of cross charges, so that it was extremely difficult to ascertain what that Department cost. The Post Office received nearly £250,000 from the National Telephone Company. Would the House believe that this huge item was nowhere entered in the accounts presented to Parliament? It did not appear in the Estimates, it did not appear in the Finance Accounts, but if they looked carefully they would discover it hidden away under the item "For transmission of telegrams, etc., collected in cash." The "etc." covered nearly £250,000 received, not for transmission of telegrams, but for royalties from the National Telephone Company. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would allow the House to have a return of the gross expenditure of each Department of the State, so that they might know exactly what the services were that the House controlled, and what they really cost the country. At the present moment no man in the country, certainly none in the Treasury, knew the total sum of the expenditure for which the House was responsible. As to old-age pensions, he was very glad indeed that the right hon. Gentleman who spoke a little while ago, had called attention to the extraordinary mistake made by the Prime Minister in his description of the German old-age pensions scheme. The Prime Minister had altogether overlooked the fact that the essence of the German scheme was that it provided pensions for people when they wanted them and not merely at the age of seventy. The Germans called them "invalidity" pensions; he thought the better name would be "infirmity" pensions. The German got his pension as soon as he was infirm. When he was in Germany last year he was told that a man aged twenty-eight years was receiving a pension. In Germany the system of giving pensions to people over seventy was only transitional; it was never intended to be permanent. The number receiving old-age pensions because they were over seventy a few years ago was 300,000; it was now only 126,000. Many people over seventy got the infirmity pension instead of the old-age pension and an increasing number would do so. The whole idea of the German scheme was to give a man a pension when he was no longer able to support himself. If he could support himself at seventy he would get a small pension, but he did not get the infirmity pension until he became infirm. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would take the opportunity of informing the country as to this rather misleading statement about the German system, owing to the unfortunate slip of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister stated that the objection to a contributory scheme was that it could not come into operation for twenty years. The German scheme was contributory, and it came into operation at once. The law was passed in 1889, and eighteen months later a great many people were drawing their pensions. A point on which he strongly differed from the right hon. Gentleman opposite was as to his opposition to a reduction of the sugar tax. He only regretted that it was not abolished altogether; it seemed to him to be an utterly iniquitous tax. He could not imagine anything more unjust than that people who had very little means, and to whom sugar was one of the necessaries of life, especially for the children, should be called upon to pay this tax in order that somebody they did not know might draw pensions because they were over seventy years of age—somebody who might not have been a worker all his life, or somebody who might not be in need. He was sure that when the Government came to deal more closely with the question they would find many difficulties arise. He wondered whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer was prepared with a definition of what he meant by income. What was income? Did a free gift from a father to a son, or from the son to his parents, count as income? Supposing a son was making an allowance of £100 a year to his mother, under the law as applied to the income-tax she would still be entitled to claim 5s. a week for a pension. That was one of the numerous objections to dealing with old-age pensions on a charitable basis instead of by a contributory scheme. Certainly, if they had to raise more revenue, he would be opposed to any attempt to raise it by imposing additional taxation on commodities used by the masses of the people. The only sound system of taxation was the democratic system of direct taxation under which every man paid something, and every man knew he was paying.

An HON. MEMBER: According to his means.

*MR. HAROLD COX: Obviously. The objection to indirect taxes was that they were not according to means. The sugar tax on a labourer with a large family amounted to an income-tax of 6d. He believed most sincerely that the working classes of this country were prepared to face direct taxation. Of course, some people always grumbled.

[Laughter.] Yes, in all classes. He believed that the masses of the people, when once the matter was put to them, would be willing to face direct taxes, and he was sure of this, that, unless they were so willing, it would be impossible to make democracy a success.

*MR. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney) said he did not suppose that hon. Members on either side of the House grudged the Prime Minister his good fortune in obtaining revenue so largely in excess of his expectations when he brought forward last year's Budget. Fortune had showered upon him the produce of a 1s. income-tax in a year of booming trade. His new regulations had resulted in a more stringent collection of this tax so as to include many who had formerly escaped the watchful eye of the collectors. There had been no falling off in the mortality of the millionaires, and the net result of these happy circumstances was an available surplus of £4,400,000—a result of which the right hon. Gentleman might well be proud. While congratulating the Prime Minister on that result, he did so without approving the methods by which this revenue from taxation had been collected. He believed that most of those who sat on the Opposition side of the House agreed with him in dissenting from the Prime Minister's methods of finance, and for three reasons. First of all, they believed they were dangerous methods, which would imperil the security of the country; and so long as they had in time of peace, a 1s. income-tax, no room or opportunity was left for the expansion which might become necessary if unfortunately we found ourselves engaged in any great or prolonged war. Secondly, they asserted that the collection of over £130,000,000 in taxes was inconsistent with and in direct contravention of the pledges and promises given by hon. Gentlemen opposite at the last election, and on the strength of which they were returned to power. Lastly, they viewed with the greatest apprehension and alarm the inroads which were being made upon the Sinking Fund, and the huge and costly liabilities which this Government was building up, and which future Governments would have to meet. What were the promises of hon. Gentlemen opposite as to retrenchment and reduction? He would venture to remind the House of the condemnatory censure which was passed on the last Budget of his right hon. friend below him. In that year the sum of £129,500,000 was collected from taxes, and in that he included that portion of taxation appropriated to local requirements. They had been told by hon. Gentlemen opposite in the debate which then took place, on the occasion when the present First Lord of the Admiralty moved the reduction of the income-tax, also in the great meeting at the Albert Hall, and on every platform throughout the country, that the taxes which were collected under that Budget were an intolerable burden upon the commerce and industry of the country. That was on the eve of the general election, when hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite were courting the constituencies and leading the country to believe that they were about to inaugurate a blessed era of reduced taxation. He did not refer to the penny taken off tea, or the farthing recently taken off sugar, but to the general reduction which was promised, and the saving that was to be made for the taxpayers' pockets. Yet here they were, two and a half years after the Party opposite had come into power, with the Prime Minister coming down to the House and congratulating himself, and openly boasting, that he had been able to collect in taxation £130,000,000, or £800,000 more than had been collected under the Budget of his right hon. friend below him, which had been described as an intolerable burden on commerce and the people of the country. What justification had hon. Gentlemen opposite to offer? Had the situation so changed as to justify them in abandoning the pledges which they gave at the last election? Trade had been good, and the income-tax had furnished a very handsome return. All that they admitted, but the question was whether the country was any better able to-day to bear this great and increased burden of taxation than it was in 1905 when it was described as intolerable and grievously oppressive upon the trade and commerce of the country. Take the case of the income-tax, the great staple tax of the country. He did not imagine that the payer of income-tax had much cause to expect relief or sympathy from Gentlemen sitting opposite, and that conclusion was borne out by a speech made two Sundays ago by the Solicitor-General at Whitfield's Tabernacle. After praising the courage of the Prime Minister, the hon. and learned Gentleman proceeded to say he hoped to see remedied the present system and an adjustment made which might lighten indirect taxation. But after all, the payer of income-tax was the payer of a tax which was the backbone of our financial system. Were the payers of income-tax better able to-day to bear the brunt of the tax than they were in 1905 ? Most emphatically they were not. Take the list of the securities of the country. Compare the prices which obtained in 1905 with those at which securities could be sold last year. Take first of all Government securities alone. There was a depreciation between these years of something like £50,000,000. Corporation stocks, railways, Colonial securities—every class of investment in which the income-tax payer had his money—showed a grave and severe depreciation since Gentlemen opposite had come into office. And yet last year in spite of this great depreciation the Government exacted from the income-tax payer nearly 32½ millions, or a million more than his right hon. friend below him obtained from them in the last year of the late Government. They were told that last year was a record year for trade. It was certainly a record year for taxation in time of peace, and this year when taxation was to be higher still it was going to be a record year for industrial depression and lack of employment. We had entered upon one of those cycles, which every country under every fiscal system at times had to meet, of industrial depression. Trade to-day was on the decline. From every part of the country, from every branch of commerce, they received the same disquieting reports. Hon Gentlemen opposite no longer quoted the Board of Trade Returns, and their publication had ceased in many Radical papers. Wages had been reduced in practically every trade, and there were at present all those elements which made for profound industrial depression and the aggravated distress of the worker. In spite of this, the Prime Minister took a very cheerful view of the situation. He presented a Budget in which he expected to receive increased revenue from Customs, leaving out the question of sugar. He estimated that he was going to get more from death duties, and he expected to receive £600,000 more from income-tax. Time alone would show whether these increases would be justified. But whether they were justified or not they had this grave fact, that they were not collecting this huge amount of taxes in a year of booming trade, but in a year of very aggravated commercial depression. And this was only the beginning of worse things that were to come. Next year and the two following years they would be met by increasing expenditure in all directions. The Army, the Navy, and the Civil Service would make greater demands, and in addition there was the scheme of old-age pensions which was going to cost nobody knew exactly how much. In time of great prosperity or of low taxation when they had got an improving trade, or, possibly even under another fiscal system, they might be justified in accepting these great and unknown responsibilities. But to-day with excessive and oppressive taxation, at the very commencement of an acute and grave industrial depression, instead of curtailing expenditure they wildly and blindly rushed into new extravagances and new liabilities, the measure of which no one could estimate and the cost of which very few dared to contemplate. The Prime Minister frankly recognised this, and admitted the truth of it. He candidly confessed that in the future they would have to meet these new liabilities by fresh taxation. He would quote a few words from his Budget speech—

> "In his opinion there could not be a greater mistake than to suppose that a free trade Financial Minister had come to the end or was nearly approaching the end of his resources of taxation."

These words were received by hon. Gentleman behind him with cheers—he thought *The Times* report said "loud cheers." It was certainly very interesting to find that hon. Gentleman did not disapprove of increased taxation, when it happened to be free trade taxation and under the auspices of a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer. Clearly the Chancellor of the Exchequer contemplated increased taxation. But it was not a matter of speculation at all. As surely as they were sitting there, with all the great liabilities they were taking and the increases they would have to meet on the Army, Navy, and Civil Service, hon. Gentlemen opposite, if they continued to occupy those benches, would have very largely and gravely to increase the taxation of the country. The old-age pension scheme alone must be a continually increasing scheme. The Prime Minister also recognised that. He said that it was only the beginning of a sound and workable scheme. What he asked was the ultimate ideal at which this scheme aimed. What were the ends which the right hon. Gentleman had in view? What was the ultimate cost which he expected it would entail? That information ought to be given before they could pronounce any definite decision upon the scheme. It was usual when any policy was promoted which was admitted to be only the beginning of something further to explain what the further steps were to be. The great danger of the scheme to his mind was that it did not give anybody exactly what he wanted and asked for, and hence opened the door to very violent political pressure at elections. The friendly societies and trade unions were bound to ask that their pensioners should be included, and promises to reduce the age to sixty-five and to make the scheme non-contributory would be exacted by the Labour Party, and would be heedlessly given. Hon. Gentlemen opposite had given in to the Labour Party in the past. They struggled, but ultimately they surrendered—

> "A little still she strove, and oft repented,
> And whispering she would ne'er consent,
> consented."

Like the frail lady of whom these lines were written, he was afraid hon. Gentlemen opposite would struggle again and would be ultimately seduced by the blandishments or threats of hon. Members below the gangway. Apart from this, there was the natural growth of the scheme. Those at present over the age of seventy were really the survivors of the population which existed before the year 1838, which was a mere fraction of the present population. Every year the number of persons over seventy would increase, and their increase would be proportionate to the increase of the population during the past seventy years. How was it proposed to meet these increasing charges? The right hon. Gentleman said they had not nearly come to the end of free trade resources. He very respectfully differed and asserted that they had already crossed the boundary of safe and sane free trade finance and had arrived within the danger zone. They might continue to increase taxes, have graduated income-tax, and tax mining royalties and site values, but the result would only be to cripple trade and industry and stretch to breaking point the elastic sources of revenue which should only be stretched in time of great national emergency or peril. He believed there was never a greater step taken towards tariff reform than that which the Prime Minister had taken in undertaking in a time of declining trade and diminishing revenue these great responsibilities and liabilities with which the free trade system would not provide him with the means of dealing. That was one of the reasons why he congratulated the right hon. Gentleman on his Budget.

*Mr. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) said that the Budget under consideration opened up a new chapter in their financial arrangements, and raised great possibilities. Following the almost immemorial custom, he proposed to deal with some of the wider aspects of the Budget statement. He was one of those, he frankly confessed, who looked with some concern upon the magnitude of our national expenditure, more especially that part of it dealing with armaments. The figures in this respect showed an almost appalling increase within the last ten years. He was not going to labour the matter, but the figures could not be too often recalled, not only to the attention of this House, but also to the attention of those outside the House of Commons. The figures of the net Exchequer receipts and issues showed that this country carried on its affairs in the year ending 31st March, 1887, with an expenditure of £78,000,000 sterling. That total rose in 1897 to £88,000,000, and by the year 1906 it had reached £123,000,000 sterling. It was as important to see where the money was going as to look at the volume. The most convenient way to do this was to break up the expenditure under three headings, viz.: Debt, Civil expenditure, and armaments. In the year 1887 this country spent £26,000,000 upon Debt, £20,000,000 Civil expenditure, and £32,000,000 upon armaments. In 1897 the figures were: for Debt, £25,000,000; Civil expenditure, £23,000,000; and £40,000,000 upon armaments. In the year 1906 the totals were Debt, £31,000,000; Civil expenditure, £32,000,000; and armaments, £60,000,000. Although during the first ten years of the period he had mentioned the expenditure upon armaments increased by 25 per cent., during the last nine years the increase under the same heading had been 50 per cent. He ventured to think that those figures would provide them with food for reflection. Figures relating to the South African War did not come into the years he had given. That gigantic increase in their expenditure, more particularly upon armaments, was not permitted to pass without protest from two Conservative statesmen of the very highest rank. The first year he would take was up to 31st March, 1887, for which a Liberal Cabinet was responsible. It was upon the proposal to increase that expenditure of £78,000,000 in the financial year 1887 that Lord Randolph Churchill sacrificed himself on the altar of economy. It would be remembered that Lord Randolph Churchill, when the Estimates for 1887–8 were before the cabinet, failed to convince his colleagues that a reduction in the cost of armaments and economy ought to be the order of the day, and upon those grounds he sacrificed the whole of his political career. The remarkable features of his proposed Budget had been disclosed to the public by his son in that remarkable biography which appeared a short time ago. What did another distinguished Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer say—he alluded to Sir Michael Hicks Beach. What did he say with regard to the finance of the Conservative Government of which he was a member? In the year 1904, when Sir Michael Hicks Beach left the Government of which the Leader of the Opposition was then Prime Minister, he used most striking language, in which he said—

> "We have again seen an increase in the present year of £2,750,000 on the Naval Estimates, for which I am bound to say that, in my opinion, no sufficient reason has yet been given."

That was a clear condemnation of the naval policy, but Sir Michael used much more striking language, for he proceeded to say—

> "I had protested as Chancellor of the Exchequer for years against the growth. I had protested to my colleagues; I had protested to this House, and I had endeavoured to show the country what I thought were the main dangers to our finances of that growth, because it must never be forgotten that that growth has been far in excess of the automatic growth of our revenue. My protests and my sermons were received with indifference. Had they been met with more sympathy I might not now be addressing the House from this place."

Sir M. Hicks Beach told the House that he refused to continue a member of the Government because his protest against increasing expenditure had been ignored. The House would remember the policy of the days which led up to that tremendous leap which occurred in the expenditure of this country. They recollected the "long spoon" speeches and other unhappy language which culminated in the most unhappy war in South Africa. He thought John Bull had a pretty severe headache after that war, and he was now in rather a different mood. They had lived to see an entirely changed atmosphere in the country at large, and as a consequence in that House. There had taken place a most unexampled movement which sent the present Government into power with such an enormous majority, and there was a determination that the expenditure of this country had reached alarming proportions and ought to be reduced. He wished to give Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary of the late Government, every credit for the change he brought about in the expenditure upon armaments. They were all very glad to hear in the King's Speech the references which were made to this subject, and some of them had the privilege of hearing the Prime Minister at a recent gathering elsewhere in which he raised again the old watchwords of "Peace, Retrenchment and Reform." Peace was always and must be followed by retrenchment. He was glad to acknowledge that in this matter a good sound beginning had been made. [An HON. MEMBER: There has been an increase of £3,000,000 in the expenditure.] The Prime Minister had told them that within the last three years there had been a reduction of some £5,000,000 in the expenditure upon armaments. What he was pleading for was that this reduction of expenditure on armaments should be carried on at an accelerated rate. He was glad that the Campbell-Bannerman Administration had closed with the Budget they were now discussing. They had a new Government in a sense, and they had a new Prime Minister, a new Chancellor of the Exchequer, a new First Lord of the Admiralty, and they must have their due influence and effect. Looking to the future he agreed with what fell from the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year that they could not look upon a Budget merely as an isolated act by itself, and they must take into account the proposals contained in a series of Budgets. There was no question at the present time as to what was occupying the attention of the Committee, viz., old-age pensions. That scheme was a new element in the situation, and carried with it consequences which would be felt for many a long year to come. Looking upon the Budget for which his right hon. friend would be responsible, namely, for the year which would begin on 1st April, 1909, he was not so sure that they could regard the prospect with quite the same satisfaction as they could the present Budget and the one that preceded it. Exchequer on 1st April next would be face to face with an expenditure of £7,500,000 or £8,000,000 which was not included in the expenditure this year. There would be £4,500,000 to £5,000,000 for old-age pensions, £1,500,000 for education, and assuredly an automatic increase of £1,500,000. That additional expenditure would have to be provided for *nolens volens.* How was that to be obtained? He was not going to prophesy what would be in the Budget next year. "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." He had heard some suggestions as to the diminishing of the Sinking Fund and the appropriation of the income-tax. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer woud be chary about accepting any idea of that kind. He agreed with his hon. friend the Member for Bedfordshire as to the vital importance of maintaining the provision for the repayment of Debt. It must be remembered that the lowest point of the deadweight Debt in the last ten years was £628,000,000. The Prime Minister told them—and no doubt he was right—that, by the end of this financial year the Debt would be a little under £700,000,000. It would, therefore, at the end of the financial year stand £70,000,000 higher than ten years ago. In these and other circumstances that might be mentioned he doubted very much whether there was any room for slackening the repayment of the Debt. Our national credit depended upon it. Those who knew anything about money matters in the City of London knew how vital the treatment of the Debt by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the time being was to our highest financial interests. Therefore, he respectfully and earnestly warned his right hon. friend against lending too ready an ear to the suggestions as to finding some of his deficit from a reduction in the Sinking Fund. The right hon. Gentleman might get something more from the death duties. He had always thought that some of the little steps in the gradation of these duties might be swept away. There were other sources no doubt. But in the long run the only safe source for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to look to for securing the necessary funds would be that described by the old word "retrenchment." In 1897 the expenditure on armaments was £40,000,000. Surely we need not spend £60,000,000 now. He hoped that the Cabinet would apply its mind strongly to the matter of the reduction of expenditure. There was room surely for a vigorous effort in this direction. It was a good thing on its own merits. He maintained most strongly that all they spent on armaments above a certain figure—he admitted that they must reckon on spending up to a certain figure—was a diversion of money from productive industry and employment. [An HON. MEMBER: What figure?]

Of course the Cabinet must in the last resort be the judge and stand or fall by their decision. Then they came to the experts. He had had a good deal to do with experts. Whether they were lawyers, architects, or engineers, they were very good servants but very bad masters. They always wanted the arrangement of policy in their own hands. What did Peel say on this subject? He said—

> "If you adopt the opinions of military men, naturally anxious for the security of every available point, naturally anxious to throw upon you the whole responsibility for the loss, in the event of war breaking out, of some of our valuable possessions, you would overwhelm this country with taxes in time of peace."

These words were as true to-day as when they were spoken. Speaking on 30th June, 1893, Mr. Gladstone said—

> "I must make an admission. I do not think that in this matter we ought to be guided exclusively—perhaps even principally—by those who may consider themselves experts."

That was quite a sound doctrine. It was the doctrine held not only by Mr. Gladstone, but by Sir William Harcourt and by Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. He hoped the Prime Minister would bear in mind the remarkable words spoken in 1904 by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. He said—

> "It is impossible for any Chancellor of the Exchequer, whatever his ability, whatever his desire for economy, really to check the expenditure of this country, unless he has the active, the firm and continuous, support of the Prime Minister of the day."

They might look with confidence to the Chancellor of the Exchequer having that firm and continuous support from the Prime Minister of the day. They had as First Lord of the Admiralty one who had been at the Treasury where he had gained experience which would be useful in the office he now held. He hoped that the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not listen indulgently, or too speedily, to all the demands made even by Members on their own side of the House. They had a Secretary of State for War who was always urging the claims of the Territorial Army. He had sometimes differed widely from his right hon. friend during the many years he had known him, but he had always done justice to his extraordinary intellectual ability. He believed that if the Cabinet were to say to the right hon. Gentleman: "Here is £25,000,000 for the Army" he would be able to give them a good Army for that. They knew the record of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and they had the greatest possible confidence in him. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would take care to impress on his colleagues that the need for financial retrenchment was great. Courage was needed no doubt to resist experts and courage to resist a sort of clamour for armaments even from a section of the supporters of the Government. But they looked to the Government for courage. The opportunity for retrenchment was peculiarly favourable at the present moment. Our foreign relations were good. As to the Colonies, especially South Africa, matters were in happy contrast to what prevailed a few years ago. He believed that retrenchment in itself would be productive of the very greatest good to the country. It would provide funds for much-needed social reforms, and he was satisfied the Government would have at its back not only the great majority of those who called themselves supporters in this House, but overwhelming sentiment outside. The utterances of Ministers were all that could be desired, and all that was wanted was that they should translate those utterances into strong action.

*Mr. SNOWDEN (Blackburn) said he wished, speaking on behalf of the Labour Party, to take a point of view very different indeed from that taken by the hon. Member for Stepney. The Labour Party in this House and in the country, especially the active Socialist section of that Party, looked to the Budget not merely as a means of annually discharging the disagreeable task of providing for unavoidable national expenditure, but as a very valuable means of redressing some of those social inequalities which they believed should be the first and foremost consideration of this House. They accepted the orthodox canon of taxation that every class should contribute to the expenditure of the country in proportion to the benefits they receive from the Government. The Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Prime Minister acting in his behalf had dilated in the usual rhetorical free trade way on the wonderful expansion of our foreign trade during the last few years. It seemed to be very difficult for the orthodox free trader to estimate the social condition of the country except by the figures on the two sides of the Board of Trade Returns. During the last seven years there had been an enormous increase in the total of our foreign trade, There was another side to this question, and it was to that side he desired to direct the attention of the Committee. Reference had frequently been made in the debate that afternoon to the remarkable improvement in trade during the last four or five years, the increase in production representing an increase in wealth. The increase of the wealth must go somewhere. Now, where had this increased production during the last few years gone? According to official figures there had been during six of the last eight years a reduction in the aggregate wages received by the wage-earners. It was quite true that during the years 1906–7 there had been some improvement, but the reaction had already set in. From the Board of Trade Returns for April there had been an aggregate decrease in the wages of £10,000 a week; and the number of unemployed, not including those locked out or who were resisting a reduction of wages, amounted to 7½ per cent., an increase of more than 50 per cent. during the last twelve months. The latest Report with regard to pauperism showed that the number of indoor paupers was higher to-day than at any previous period on record. The total number of paupers during the last ten years—during the boom in trade—had increased by 16 per cent., and in March last they had increased by 3 per cent. compared with the corresponding month twelve months ago. He came from Birmingham that morning and saw from a local paper that in two unions in that great centre of industry, after six years of unparalleled trade prosperity and increased wealth production, there was an increase of 15 per cent. in the total number of paupers as compared with twelve months ago. He cited those facts to prove that that enormous increase of wealth during the last five or six years had not gone to improve the condition of the people. They had not received it in better wages. There was another important factor, and that was that during that period of good trade there had been an inflation of prices. Anyone acquainted with retail prices of the necessaries of life was aware that the cost of living to the working classes of this country had increased 25 per cent., so that while somebody had been getting richer—enormously richer—during the last five or six years, the condition of the wage-earning classes of the country was actually and to a greater extent relatively poorer than it was before. That was a problem which must be considered in framing any financial statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They, as Socialists, had recognised that those extremes of poverty and riches, and the causes of them, could not be wholly dealt with by Government financiers. But they looked to two remedies which they hoped to see applied simultaneously. They must get down to the root cause, to the monopoly of the means of living, to the private ownership of land, of capital and the means of production, and to the transfer of those undertakings, those private monopolies, to public control. At the same time they wanted to see the powers of taxation used in order to palliate the existing evils due to these causes. He had said that Socialists would accept the orthodox canon of taxation that a man ought to contribute to the State according to his means. He made bold to state that the great mass represented by at least 2,000,000 families in this country, or a population of over 8,000,000, had not an average income of £1 a week. Imagine the housing, food, clothing and all the other expenses of a working man's family to be paid for out of less than £1 a week! What did a family like that owe to the State? What were the benefits they received from the State? He ventured to say that there was not a state of barbarism where, without Government, a man and his family could not live in the full standard of comfort within their knowledge. They never suffered hunger; they never suffered privation. He held that they might say of the majority of the wage-earning classes that they owed nothing to the State; and yet under the present system of taxation that was the class which was contributing to a very great extent to the expenditure of the country. He found that since 1900 there had been an increase of something like twenty millions, or more, in Customs and Excise taxation, and of that probably four-fifths was paid by the working classes. It was admitted that there had been an enormous increase in the wealth of the country as represented by the Income-Tax returns. During the first ten years of the last twenty years the growth of the gross amount of income brought under the review of the Inland Revenue amounted to £98,000,000 a year; but during the last ten years of the last twenty years the increase was represented by the sum of £246,000,000 in the year, which showed that during the last ten years that small part of our population which were assessed for the income-tax had been growing richer at the rate of more than two and a half times more rapidly than in the previous ten years. And yet they had hon. Members who told them the limits of taxation had been reached by an income-tax of less than 1s. in the £. Therefore the criticism of his Party that the Budget did little to relieve the very unfair burden of taxation which weighed on that portion of the population least able to bear it. The Prime Minister said that last year he had relieved a certain section of income-tax payers and that this year it was in the natural order the turn of the indirect taxpayers. The turn of direct and indirect taxpayers was to come alternately it appeared! The late Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his first Budget speech, reduced the tea duty by 1d. in the pound, but that did not affect the working people only. It affected the income-tax payers to the same extent, perhaps a little more. Last year there was not a single penny of relief to the indirect taxpayers—the working classes. This year there was a relief of half the sugar duty, but that did not apply only to the working people; it also applied to the income-tax payers. Therefore it was the rich man's turn every time, but in the natural course of events those upon whom taxation bore most heavily had only to expect relief alternately. He would not deal generally now with the old-age pensions scheme, but only refer to it as illustrating the way in which the means of social reform should be dealt with. A million and a quarter was taken out of taxation this year to pay for old-age pensions; but they on those benches had not forgotten that twelve months ago, the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that this year he would have a sum of not less than £2,250,000 for old-age pensions. That statement had done duty on every Liberal platform during recent bye-elections. That was the promise, but the redemption of the promise was that only something less than half that amount was to be devoted to the purpose of old-age pensions. But where was this £1,250,000 to come from? Who was to pay it? It was to be obtained by only taking off half the sugar duty, and, therefore, to be obtained from a tax on the people's food. This free trade Government, this social reform Government, was prepared to prove that the maintenance of free trade and the carrying out of social reforms were compatible with each other. Was that to be done by a retention of the taxes upon the people's food? Session after session, generation after generation, had been spent in passing Acts of Parliament, but the condition of the people remained practically the same. The chief reason for that was the financial basis of this so-called social reform, as this old-age pensions scheme would make no great change in the distribution of wealth. On the contrary, it would make the rich richer, and the poor poorer; it would make the rich better off than they were, for it would relieve their poor rates and it would enable them, like the brewers, to withdraw their subscriptions from charitable associations. No rich man was going to be a penny poorer than he was to-day by this scheme. Hon. Members had stated that every hon. Member who came to the House at the last election was pledged to economy. The Labour Party made no such pledge. They were in favour of high taxation and great expenditure, but they wanted that expenditure to be in the direction of improving the condition of the people, and they wanted the taxation taken from the bloated incomes of the rich. He believed in high expenditure wisely carried out, because he believed by such expenditure the people would receive a better return than by individual expenditure. The Prime Minister had stated that Mr. Charles Booth's scheme would cost from £16,000,000 to £28,000,000 a year—a cost which he said was "obviously prohibitive." It was prohibitive only to those who were too blind to see whence the money could be obtained. The incomes received largely in the form of dividends from limited liability companies had increased during the last ten years by £250,000,000 a year. He did not suggest that that should be taken this year; but if they were to take the whole of that, not one of those persons would be a penny the worse off than they were ten years ago, and they were certainly not next door to the workhouse then, and it would pay for Mr. Charles Booth's scheme of old-age pensions ten times over. But he would make a more moderate suggestion. The Prime Minister rejected the recommendation of the Select Committee in favour of a graduated income-tax because he said the difficulties of graduation were insuperable. But who said so? The permanent officials of the Inland Revenue. But it was always the business of permanent officials to resist changes in the administration of their departments. Every Chancellor of the Exchequer in the past had said that differentiation of income-tax was impossible, yet the Board of Revenue, when it was forced upon them had evolved a scheme of differentiation. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer said: "Prepare me a scheme of graduation of income-tax," it would be done within a month, and when it was carried into effect no insuperable difficulty would be found. He was a very moderate man, and a merciful man, and he was always prepared to show those who had plundered the people in the past more mercy than they had had shown the people. He, therefore, suggested that the Government should have a graduated income-tax for incomes of over £5,000 a year, and he would leave a person with such an income sufficient to provide the necessaries and some of the luxuries of life. Sir Henry Primrose had stated there were 10,000 persons in the country with an income of over £5,000 a year, and their total annual income was £120,000,000 a year; but that was a conservative estimate. It would be a truer calculation to say there were 16,000 of such persons, and their total income could not be less than £200,000,000 a year. A 10 per cent. tax on that income would bring in £20,000,000 a year, which would provide old-age pensions, and still leave £180,000,000 a year to be enjoyed by 16,000 persons. There were no insuperable difficulties in carrying out a scheme like that and it contained, he believed, all the essentials of good taxation. Such an impost would tax only a small number of people, and be exceedingly popular with everybody except the 16,000 persons. The Prime Minister said it would be difficult to ascertain the incomes of those people. Not at all; the income of a very rich man was much more easily ascertained than the income of a comparatively poor man. He could not hide his income, for it came largely from permanent property. But that did not exhaust the resources of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for there was still the death duties. They looked at this question of taxation in his opinion entirely from the wrong point of view. They looked upon what they took; they ought to look upon what they left after they had taxed it. Ten per cent. on an estate of £1,000,000 took £100,000. That was a big sum, but it left £900,000, but if they took 50 per cent. it still left £500,000, which was sufficient for a man to leave to those behind him, and he believed that if such a man knew that by his death he must contribute such an amount to society, he would pass to the life beyond in a much more comfortable frame of mind. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to transfer a large proportion of the taxation at present borne by the poor part of the population to those who had more than they were able to spend usefully either upon themselves or upon others, and to signalise his taking of office by using the powers of the Finance Bill to carry out this great scheme of social reform to which his party, above all, were pledged at the general election.

*MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said that the hon. Member for Blackburn had pointed out to the right hon. Gentleman the immense amount of wealth which lay direct to his hand in direct taxation; but on the assumption that indirect taxation would continue to prevail, he would confine his remarks entirely to that side of the problem. He believed that a Budget was not only an estimated expenditure, but also a proposal as to how that expenditure was to be met. If that were so, the Budget which they were now discussing was hardly in every respect satisfactory. The Prime Minister had practically told them last year that it was the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to budget forward. This year that policy had been so wholly abandoned that, far from budgeting forward, there was not even adequate provision to meet the undertakings which the right hon. Gentleman's proposals involved. The Budget discouraged thrift in the individual by making it unwise or save more than would produce 10s. a week. It practised improvidence on the part of the State, for it made no provision whatever for the greater part of the old-age pension scheme which was to be introduced, nor did it provide for the enormous increase in naval expenditure which it was agreed on all hands would be necessary in the coming year, owing to the shortage of the provision already made. It seemed to him that this cynical acquiescence in its own helplessness was characteristic of the Government. It was apparent in the licensing scheme now before the country. The Government had told them that the clubs were a great difficulty, and they asked their opponents to find a solution. The same thing had taken place on the Education Bill. They acknowledged that a concordat might be arrived at, but they asked somebody else to effect it. Was it to be the same in this case? They had created difficulties in the system of taxation, and they asked somebody else to find a way out for them. Surely, one would hardly expect that the Government would look to their opponents in this case for their fiscal salvation. It might be party politics, but it was hardly statesmanship. He would like to deal briefly with the question of indirect taxation. The sugar tax had been reduced, and he heartily approved of that reduction, though not because he thought on existing lines they could afford that reduction at all, but because he believed that the whole of this system of indirect taxation was absolutely wrong. It put taxes on those articles which, because they could not produce the articles in this country, were paid by the consumer, and by him alone. The amount of taxation levied was fixed by the demands of the Exchequer and not by the casual product of any given set of taxes. The indirect taxes now raised in this country amounted to £60,000,000, and they were raised entirely on articles of food, drink, and other articles which were the luxuries of the poorer classes, and on which everbody was agreed that the consumers paid the whole of the taxes. Yet this was a "free food" country, and the Government was a Free Trade Government. The question of whether we had not better raise a portion of these taxes on articles which we could produce, of course brought up the whole subject of the incidence of taxation, and whether under all the circumstances the consumer paid the whole of the taxes or not. On this point, he thought he was entitled to quote the Prime Minister as giving the free trade view. Speaking at the Colonial Conference last year, the Prime Minister said—

> "When we impose an import duty upon a commodity which is a necessity of life or of industry, one or the other, and when the commodity is of such a kind that you cannot substantially make good the supply you want from domestic sources—given these two conditions (I carefully limit my proposition in that way) sooner or later, though the process may be delayed or deflected for a time, that duty appears in added cost to the consumer."

This meant that the consumer paid the whole tax under two conditions. One was that the article must be a necessary of life or of industry, and therefore must be bought, no matter what the price; and the other condition was that it could not be substantially made good from domestic sources. He would respectfully attempt to test the truth of that doctrine. Everybody was agreed that on an article like tea, which we could not produce in this country, the consumer paid the whole of the tax. He thought that everyone was equally agreed that, if they had an import tax on an article like coal, which was practically entirely produced in this country, the quantity coming from foreign countries being very small, no matter what the import duty was, it would have no effect whatever on the price, and, therefore, in that case the foreign importer would pay the tax. If that were so, then in, between these two extreme cases, there must be a large middle territory of articles which we produced in considerable quantities in this country, but of which we could not substantially "make good" the whole of our requirements. The question was at what point between these two extreme cases did the Prime Minister's words "make good" come into operation. Was it when the quantity imported was 5, 50 or 95 per cent.? Did the Prime Minister suggest that when they arrived at that point the tax would suddenly jump from the shoulders of the consumer to the shoulders of the foreign importer? It was evident that there was a point where the foreigner paid a portion of the taxes although the consumer paid a portion, but that point was not necessarily one where we could "make good" the whole of our requirements. The fact was that the less dependent we were on foreign importers the more nearly must they come to our terms even if those terms included duties if they wished to get into our markets. They would pay to get into our markets. They would pay the tariff in direct proportion as they needed our markets and we did not need their goods. The tariff acted in two ways. It developed the home supplies, and in that way it had a counteracting influence against a rise in prices. He admitted that the tariff tended to raise prices, but it also tended to foster the home supply, and the more it did the latter, the less could it have the former effect; that was to say, the more a tariff tended to foster supply the less would tariff tend to raise prices, because the country was increasing its home supply. In other words, they might say that the inherent tendency of tariff was more to shift the area of supply than the quantity of that supply. If that were so, then no matter whence came the supply, whether from inside or outside a tariff wall, the only thing that was necessary not to affect the price was that the amount of supply should be the same and that it should be produced equally cheaply. If the supply remained the same, and they could foster the national supply rather than the external supply, and the price, therefore, remained the same, then the consumer paid nothing extra; but it made a world of difference to the producer here; it made a world of difference to a country like ours which depended on its industries; it made a world of difference whether we produced what we required for ourselves, or whether we imported those articles made by foreign hands. In discussing a problem of this kind, of course they must assume, as they were justified at any rate in assuming, that any scheme of tariffs would be accompanied by a preferential scheme, and that the products of our colonies would come in free, while the products of foreign countries would be taxed. But, if so, then the word "domestic," as used in this case, immediately became changed into the word "imperial," and it was a question of what came from imperial sources of supply as against foreign sources of supply. There were few articles which could not be substantially "made good" over the whole of our Empire, but which we now imported from foreign countries. It seemed to him that the British Empire, like the United States of America, was in an exceptional position to have a system of tariffs with the maximum of advantage and the minimum of cost. On the one hand, owing to a plentiful supply in all parts of the Empire, we had the unique capacity of becoming almost self-sustaining. On the other hand, owing to the variety of people who lived in that Empire, we had an Empire which must always remain a magnet for the trade of foreign countries throughout the world. If a 2s. duty were put on American wheat while Canadian wheat came in free, the American exporter would ask himself whether it would pay him to send into the English market. He would say he could not make a better profit elsewhere because he was only dealing with his surplus stock, and there was no other country that would let him in so cheaply and so long as there was any margin of profit at all he would send it and pay the duty rather than give up the only outlet that he had for a large proportion of his surplus production. By such a system we must gain in one of two ways. If the foreigner went on sending into our markets and paid the duty there was so much the less taxation for us to pay ourselves. If he did not send them it would be because our tariffs had increased the supply from inside the barrier, and to that extent made us more independent of foreign supply and lowered the price. There was a very definite concrete case where the producer most certainly paid the burden. He was told that the freight on wheat from Buenos Ayres was 19 cents a bushel higher than it was from Winnipeg, but given equal quality it was sold at the same price. Did anyone suggest that the consumer paid that 19 cents? But what was the difference? The 19 cents was a geographical burden imposed by nature, and a duty was a fiscal burden imposed by man. If the foreign exporter and not the consumer paid the one, by what logical argument could it be suggested that the consumer paid the other and not the foreigner? If, as everyone acknowledged, the foreign exporter paid the burden in order to get his wheat into our market, why should he not pay the burden in just the same way if it was imposed by man instead of by nature? Some words used only a few days ago by a late free trade Chancellor of the Exchequer in another place rather implied the same thing that he had endeavoured to point out. The point he made was that the preference would be inoperative because foreign importers would reduce their prices so as to render it inoperative. If that was the case, it was quite evident that the consumer would have nothing extra to pay. There was another concrete case in quite a different direction. Under the recent Australian Commerce Bill English cotton goods were to have a preference of 5 per cent. against German cotton goods. The result at first was that the German goods were 5 per cent. dearer than the British, and the British makers immediately jumped at the conclusion that they had disposed of the German competition. But the moment the German makers realised their position and saw that they could not afford to lose this valuable market, they immediately reduced their prices sufficiently to counteract it by sacrificing 5 per cent. of their profits. There was no question that where the market was of value, as in this case, provided the duty was low enough to leave some margin of profit, the exporter would always be willing to sacrifice up to that point in order to retain the market which he regarded as essential. The burden only fell entirely on the consumer when we taxed such articles as we could not produce in this country, but where duties were put on articles which could be produced in the country, some portion of the tax fell upon the foreigner, and to the extent that it fell on him we were relieved from a portion of the £60,000,000 of indirect taxation which now fell entirely on our shoulders. For these reasons he would gladly see a larger proportion of the sugar tax and tea tax, and similar taxes, replaced by taxes on imported articles of the kinds which we could make in this country.

*Mr. ELLIS DAVIES (Carnarvonshire, Eifion) said it had been suggested from both sides of the House that the pension scheme should be a contributory one, apparently because it was assumed that the working classes were undertaxed, but it was difficult to reconcile the suggestion with the facts, and especially with the admission that taxation should be adapted to the means of the taxpayer to meet it. It seemed to him that they ought to go a little further and say that taxation ought to be adapted to the ability of the taxpayer after meeting the ordinary expenses of life. At present the working classes and lower middle classes were paying no less than £12,000,000 a year in food taxation alone, while a great deal of sympathy was expended on the richer portion of the community which was being called upon to pay estate duty. The total estate duty paid last year was only eighteen millions, or only six millions in excess of what was wrung out of the very necessities of the poor. Not only that, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer admitted the other day in answer to a Question that to the extent of fifty-six millions, that portion of the war expenditure had been paid out of food taxes, namely, tea and sugar. But in addition to these indirect contributions to taxation which were enforced on the poor there was also imposed on them by way of local taxation a sum which was very unfair and exceedingly burdensome. The hon. Member for Blackburn had referred to the large proportion of the working classes whose income was less than 20s. a week, and he asked how a family could be reared on 20s. a week after payment of rent and other general expenses. He found that in his own constituency the London and North-Western Railway Company were paying some of its employées a pittance of 17s. 2d., out of which he understood rates, taxes, and rent absorbed 4s. a week, leaving the small sum of 13s. to meet the expenses of the family. Over and above the working class there was another class which he thought deserved the consideration of the House, the class which was immediately above the working class, and which might be referred to as the lower middle class. No one who had come in contact with this class could fail to realise the tremendous burden of local taxation insofar as it fell upon them. In addition to that, if they rose a little in the social scale and their income was increased, they came within the pressure of the income tax. Not only must the question of local taxation be met, not only must the Imperial Exchequer provide funds for carrying out social measures, but the lower middle class, as well as the working men, deserved either by way of new sources of revenue or an increased grant from the exchequer considerable relief from the weight of taxation. The hon. Member for Blackburn had argued, and he believed rightly, that of the wealth that was produced in the country, very little reached the working classes in the shape of wages. But there were some marvellous figures issued by the Treasury with regard to the lower middle classes. Leaving aside the question of the working classes and their poverty, which was often wrongly ascribed to drinking and gambling, rather than to the conditions in which they lived, and the very low incomes which they received, the statistics issued by the Treasury proved that the wealth of the country, even if it reached this class, certainly did not put them on a scale where they could enjoy life under decent conditions, still less enable them to provide for their old age or for those who were dependent upon them. They were in the unfortunate position that in discussing questions of taxation they had really no figures. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had admitted that there were no figures available which showed the distribution of incomes up to £2,000 a year. If they had these figures they would know what was the exact income of the people and how it was distributed. But there were figures which were really quite as expressive and which afforded a very fair indication of the real wealth of the country and its distribution. Last year some 66,000 estates passed through the Treasury, and no less than two-thirds of them represented sums of less than £1,000. The whole of those estates represented about £18,000,000 and the average was about £415. At the other end of the scale there were ten people who died and left £34,000,000 or £16,000,000 more than the entire total wealth of the other 44,000 estates valued under £1,000 each. Taking the class with less than £10,000 each and which included the professional classes, large farmers, and the best business men of the country, estate at death was but the average, £3,600. The important point was that whilst five-sixths of the estates of less than £10,000 which passed through the Treasury represented £98,000,000, the other one-sixth represented £200,000,000. In the interests of social requirements and a better distribution of wealth it was the duty of the Government by a super-tax or an increase in the estate duty to obtain in this way the additional income required to carry on the affairs of the country. It was imperative that the taxation of the country which now bore so hardly upon the food of the poor and on the lower middle classes should be very considerably modified, and the Government ought to obtain the money which was necessary to reduce that taxation on the one hand and on the other to provide for future social reform by either a super-tax or an increase in the estate duty.

*SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith) said he again wished to bring forward a subject he had introduced for several years past, the question of adding together the income of married persons for the purpose of taxation. It was not a very large question, but it was important to the middle classes. An answer given him a few weeks ago led him to expect some reference to the subject in the Budget statement. This was a law which placed a restraint on marriage, and this taxation of married people bore extremely hard on a large class of the community. He would give the House a concrete case.

The following was the income-tax paid by A + B, married:—

	£	s.	d.
A's unearned income - -	320	0	0
Tax, at 1s. in £ - - -	16	0	0
B's unearned income - -	160	0	0
Tax, at 1s. in £ - - -	8	0	0
B's earned income - -	180	0	0
Tax, at 9d. in £ - - -	6	15	0
Total tax on the income of A + B - - - -	30	15	0
Less 9d. in £ on £70, owing to total combined incomes being under £700 - -	2	12	6
Total tax paid by A + B married - - - -	28	2	6

But the income-tax payable by A + B if unmarried was as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
A's unearned income - -	320	0	0
Tax, at 1s. in £ - - -	16	0	0
Abatement allowed of 1s. in £ on first £160 owing to A's income being less than £400	8	0	0
Total tax payable by A -	8	0	0
B's unearned income - -	160	0	0
Tax, at 1s. in £ - - -	8	0	0
B's earned income - -	180	0	0
Tax, at 9d. in £ - - -	6	15	0
Tax on B's earned + unearned income - - - -	14	15	0
Abatement allowed of 9d. in £ on first £160 owing to B's income being below £400 - - - -	6	0	0
Total tax payable by B -	8	15	0
Total tax payable by A + B unmarried - - -	16	15	0

It thus appeared that A and B paid £11 7s. 6d. more income-tax when they were married than they would have to pay on the same income if they were unmarried. Was marriage then a crime? Was the married man a menace to the State? Did he evade the duties of citizenship by entering into matrimony? If not, why impose this unfair burden on the man and woman who marry? Again, was it right that the State should offer an annual premium, amounting to as much as one-fifteenth of their combined quarter's income, to the man and woman who would consent to live together in defiance of moral and civil law without entering into the married state? He thought not. Owing to the regulation which permitted the Revenue authorities to combine the incomes of man and wife they were deprived of the benefit of abatement, so that the two persons were taxed £28 2s. 6d., while if they were two sisters or two brothers living together with precisely the same incomes the amount would be £16 15s. This looked like a penalty imposed on marriage, and in his view it had some effect on the marriage rate, which in 1907 showed a decline of 21 per cent. He did not suggest that both persons should receive the £160 abatement, but an abatement of £240 on the two incomes combined would be a sensible relief to small incomes; and, further, he suggested a rebate of £20 for each child. He had made a careful calculation and found that 50,000 families would be affected, and the cost would be £200,000, or less than one-tenth of 1d. in the £ on the present basis. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer answered his question two years ago he promised to consider this subject, and he would have thought that, when the income-tax remained at 1s. with a reduction to 9d. on earned incomes, this year he might have made the further concession for which he had pleaded so long. He would probably be told that the matter was too small to deserve consideration at the hands of the Inland Revenue, but that was all the more reason why it should be remedied. In many cases the joining of the incomes of the husband and wife caused a real grievance. If a man's income was £400 and he remained unmarried he would have the £160 abatement; but if he married a woman whose income was £160 and exempt before marriage, the abatement would be £120. It amounted to a penalty upon marriage. It might be necessary to raise the limits somewhat, but he hoped the new Chancellor of the Exchequer would next year do something in justice towards the middle classes on whom the income-tax fell so heavily.

MR. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.) said it was unblushing effrontery for supporters of a great war to come down to the House and repeatedly demand a reduction of the income-tax before the debt incurred through that war had been paid off. It would be well for politicians to try and realise that they should not support a war without being prepared to carry out the responsibilities and obligations which it involved. The right hon. Gentleman who was Chancellor of the Exchequer in the last Administration had stated that it would be corrupting the workers to give them old-age pensions unless they made an effort to do something themselves. He did not understand this kind of philosophy; it was not the kind of philosophy that Members of the Opposition practised themselves when they were in office. He did not wish to be offensive, but there were Members of that House who were receiving pensions from the State, given to them by the late Administration upon the principle, not that they were contributory parties, but that they had not made the provision necessary for keeping up a certain standard of living. It was not just and fair to preach one philosophy for members of a particular class and to preach another philosophy for the working classes. He congratulated the late Chancellor of the Exchequer upon his reduction of the sugar duty. He was speaking on behalf of the labouring classes largely when he said that it would be a great boon to those who were employed in trades using sugar as a raw material as well as to consumers. In taking this step the right hon. Gentleman had endeavoured to meet an acute position among the working classes, and they received the reduction of the duty in the hope that next year he would be able to remove it altogether. With regard to the old-age pension scheme he thought the age limit was too high, but he should support the scheme on the principle of getting all he could to-day and taking to-morrow all that was left over. He thought sixty-five should be the starting age, but he was glad to witness the time when a Chancellor of the Exchequer had laid down the principle for an old-age pension scheme which, if not universal in its application, was, at any rate, non-contributory in character. He regretted that the scheme was not intended to apply to those in receipt of poor relief. It meant a saving of money not to give old-age pensions to those who were in the workhouse, but in justice he could not differentiate between the right of the inmate of the workhouse to receive a pension and the right of a person who was not in receipt of poor relief to receive one. If the Government were not at present prepared to make the scheme apply to the inmates of workhouses he asked them to make it apply to those who were receiving out-door relief. Such a concession would carry into many homes a hope they had not yet got. Again, he asked why should there be a differentiation between married men and women and single men and women. He strongly appealed to the Government to amend the scheme in this respect before the Bill passed, and to provide for a pension of 5s. each to married as well as to single pensioners. In some cases it was more expensive for husband and wife to live together than to live apart. To leave the scheme as it was would be to penalise the very men and women who were the backbone of the Empire they heard so much about, and would not tend to encourage the building up of that family life of high character that Britons liked to see. He also thought the income limit for married couples should be just double the amount fixed for a single man or woman. He advocated a system of old-age pensions universal in its application, and he regretted that there should be any income limit at all. Unless the scheme was made universal they would always have about it that taint of pauperism which would be so offensive to sensitive natures. He opposed the idea of a contributory scheme because it would leave outside a great mass of women who would be unable to contribute anything, and whatever claim could be put forward for granting old-age pensions to workmen, an equal and even greater claim could be urged for giving such pensions to women. The Government should, after all, regard the old-age pension as only giving to the soldiers of industry that which had long been recognised as fair in the case of soldiers of war. The Government should have full credit for the scheme, but that was no reason why they should not make it more acceptable to the working classes as represented through the decisions arrived at by organised labour in the Trade Union Congress. Seeing that they had waited so long they were entitled to ask the Government not to send out a scheme which was objectionable, not in principle but in detail, but one which would enable them to go to the country and declare truly that the poorest of the poor would have an old-age pension.

*MR. GOOCH (Bath) said that hon. Members on the Opposition Benches appeared to be in considerable doubt as to whether the Government could find the money for old-age pensions. All in the House were aware that this Parliament was incurring heavy liabilities and that they must look forward to considerable additions to the expenditure on education. They not only looked forward to finding more money for new needs, but to the abolition of what remained of the sugar tax before the present Government went out of office. On the other hand there were several items which had to be put on the other side of the balance sheet. He was glad to hear the right hon. Member for Rushcliffe refer to the cause of retrenchment, and he welcomed the recent speech of the Prime Minister in which the right hon. Gentleman spoke quite clearly and definitely of a further retrenchment in expenditure as being within the range of practical politics in the near future. Hon. Members on the other side seemed to regard that with mixed feelings. There was one means of finding money for current and future expenditure which had not been adopted in the present Budget, although it had been referred to many times in debate; he meant the graduation of income-tax, to which they on that side of the House looked forward with as great an assurance as they did to the complete abolition of the sugar-tax. Therefore, in their opinion, there was no serious reason why they should regard the future with any great apprehension. As to old-age pensions, this was a subject in which he had taken deep interest, and to which he had given particular attention for many years. In the first place, he felt most strongly that the Government had been ill-advised in rejecting the suggestion of a sliding scale in the old-age pension scheme above the limit of 10s. The 10s. limit was, of course, very well, and it had been recommended by the Chaplin Committee eight or nine years ago; but the Government ought to depart from the Chaplin proposals in this particular. He thought it would be most desirable that the money limit should not be fixed, but that it should be a sliding limit, and he suggested, what indeed had been suggested a dozen times, that for every shilling a recipient had over 10s. he should have the maximum reduced accordingly. Thus, if he had 11s. a week, he should get a pension of 4s., and if he had 12s. he should get a pension of 3s.—15s. being the maximum limit of the income. He believed that the additional cost to the Exchequer would not be very large. In that way they would meet the justifiable charge of discouraging thrift on the part of those who had an income of 11s. or 12s. a week from their own savings. The second point was one on which there was most disagreement, though not of a party character. He meant the treatment of a married couple who were to receive only a joint pension of 7s. 6d. per week. He could not associate himself with the passionate attack on the Government made on that point by an hon. Member opposite, because he believed the Government proposal was intended to confer an equal advantage on everybody. To a simple couple living in one room and paying for rent, light and firing, 4s. a week each would be equal to 5s. to one person who did not share the rent, light and firing of a room. Therefore, the Government were not to be blamed for reducing the grant to the married couple. He would make it 8s. 6d. or 9s. a week, and he should like to empower the local authority to make this reduced grant not only to married people who lived together, but to two old women or two old sisters living together, and who were too old to live alone. They did not know what disqualifications were going to be added to those enumerated by the Prime Minister. He would urge that a record of continual drunkenness should be as much a disqualification for the receipt of an old-age pension as perpetual vagrancy or crime. He reminded the House that that was one of the disqualifications recommended by the Chaplin Committee. He felt rather surprised that so little discussion had been devoted to what might be called the character aspect of this problem. Everybody in the House agreed that the weighing up of merits and virtues was not only a difficult task, but one which none of them was good enough to undertake. On the other hand, they were anxious to see the money go to those who deserved it and would make a good use of it, and that it should be kept from those who would make a bad use of it. There were only two ways to secure this result: first, by having a stricter character test and, secondly, by cancelling the pension when necessary. If nearly everybody received a pension unless they were of notoriously bad character or were criminals, they must be exceedingly careful to see that they used the pension properly, and if it was not used properly it should be taken away from them. The scheme, as outlined by the Prime Minister, was far more lenient and lax from the point of view of character test than any other non-contributory system now at work in the world. In Denmark the test was far stricter; in Australia the investigation into the character of the applicant for a pension was incomparably more thorough than they were likely to see under the Government scheme. Many critics of the pension scheme had said that the unthrifty man and woman who had lived bad lives, although not bad enough to disqualify them altogether, were to be treated just as well as the thrifty, and this was an exceedingly serious charge. Therefore, he would look to the local authority to rebut that charge by keeping a sharp eye on the people who got the pension, and taking it away if they used it badly. As to the exclusion of existing paupers, indoor and outdoor, from the pension scheme, it was common knowledge that from 80 to 90 per cent. of indoor paupers could not, or would not, live out of the workhouses. Many of them were physically or intellectually incapable of doing so, and of those who were capable a large number had no friends to whom they could go. But there were from 5 to 10 per cent. of paupers in the workhouses who might be allowed a pension and go out of the workhouses in the event of their having friends or relations who would take them in and care for them. The real problem was the outdoor poor. The House did not know how they were to be defined until the Bill was circulated. It was clear that people would not be disqualified because they happened to be in receipt of Poor Law relief on 1st January next, because if they knew that they would make special efforts to get themselves off the list a few days before. In any case they all felt that, admitting the present scheme was only temporary, any permanent exclusion of persons now in receipt of outdoor Poor Law relief would be exceedingly unjust and distasteful to the country. The Aberdare Commission could not recommend any old-age pension scheme, but suggested that decent old people should not be driven into the workhouse. The Local Government Board then issued a circular to the guardians not to drive decent people into the workhouse but to give them outdoor relief. Therefore, they might say that those over seventy now in receipt of outdoor relief were persons of good character and would be rightly claimants under a Pension Bill. He hoped that the Government, when it had the money to take in the greater part of these outdoor paupers, would not tempt the local authority to transfer the cost of the outdoor pauper to the Treasury, but that the Exchequer would only make up the difference between outdoor relief which was paid by the locality and the pension of 5s. In the Pensions Bill there was no room for people who were less than seventy years old and at the same time suffered from incapacity or incurable disease. In almost every country the necessities of such cases were recognised and met. As soon as the money was forthcoming he hoped such cases would be met in this country, say, at the age of sixty. He would far rather that the pension age should remain high for a time and that the money to spare should be used to deal with these hard cases at the earlier age of sixty. He thought the payment of pensions should not be weekly or fortnightly, but monthly, as it was in New Zealand. With these additions and alterations the pension scheme in his opinion would be a splendid one. Even without these changes he was quite sure that the Budget meant the dawning of a new and happier day for the working classes and that the burden imposed upon the country was not too heavy to bear.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) said he had been reminded to-day, and it was not a pleasant memory, of the first occasion upon which he had spoken on this question. He then made a criticism on the Budget campaign which was unpopular on the Opposition side of the House. He said then he had no hope that the expenditure would ever be less, but that he was certain it would be more; that it would increase from year to year; that there were very few avenues for economy. He stated at that time that the expenditure for the Army and Navy must necessarily increase; that the expenditure for education could not possibly decrease, and that in the expenditure on the Civil Services there would be very little opening for economy. Not one single Member to-night had ventured to defend the position taken up by hon. Gentlemen opposite seven years ago, when the principle of economy was so strongly asserted by them, with the exception of the right hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division of Nottinghamshire. The right hon. Gentleman had certainly pointed out that there was an opportunity for decreased expenditure on the Army and Navy, but he did not notice that there was a very hearty response from hon. Members opposite or from hon. Members below the gangway to that sentiment. But the right hon. Gentleman neglected to point out where in that expenditure any reasonable reduction could be made. The hon. Member for Bath in one or two happy phrases had drawn a pretty picture of the effect of this Budget on the poor. He said it would be the dawn of a brighter day—the dawn of old-age pensions for those who reached the age of seventy! But they had to look at what the proposal itself meant. The average of compositors was fifty; of carpenters, fifty; of bricklayers, forty-nine; of stone masons, fifty-seven; and of engineers, fifty-two. Therefore, this scheme of old-age pensions would reach a very small number of the population. The promise of old-age pensions did not afford an immense amount of satisfaction to those who supported the scheme, unless they were satisfied that this non-contributory scheme was, as they hoped, going to be greatly extended and to be enjoyed, with a little pressure, by those who paid the taxes in the country. The one proposition that had come up in the debate was that all incomes above £5,000 a year should be taxed, and it was said that those incomes were enjoyed by some 16,000 people. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who was a reasonable man, though sometimes he was led astray by free trade rhetoric, did he not think it was a dangerous thing to put too heavy a pressure upon one point of taxation? Incomes below £5,000 were now taxed just as heavily as they ought to be; in fact, they were taxed far too heavily. He believed the taxation of income to the extent of 1s. in time of peace was disastrous in many ways. The Prime Minister himself had said—

> "It is a tax on property and a tax on earnings, a burden on the trade of this country which in the long run affects not only profits but wages."

At the present time they were levying between £11,000,000 and £12,000,000 by means of a tax on incomes—a war tax. Such pressure had been put on incomes that in the event of a war breakino out, which God forbid, the Government would have no resources. They had dried up the source of income against any extraordinary pressure in time of national crisis. The hon. Member for Bath had expressed regret that any proposition should be made to decrease the contribution for the reduction of the National Debt, but if he (Sir Gilbert Parker) read the right hon. Gentleman's remarks aright, the right hon. Gentleman was in absolute agreement with himself. What lay behind that argument? They must steadily reduce the National Debt, or in times of crisis they would have too heavy a burden upon the resources to which a Chancellor of the Exchequer might go. He had a great respect for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for his business ability and commercial acumen; and he ventured to say he would agree that they must by every possible means reduce the National Debt. That reduction in itself was a resource upon which they must necessarily rely in time of any national danger or crisis. They ought not to put upon any one source of taxation too heavy a pressure. It was so in the case of the Death Duties. After all, property actually represented accumulated energy.

Somebody had worked and toiled for it. It had been piled up in the hands of an individual or many individuals and was accumulated energy in the form of capital. The State stepped in and did what to his mind was dangerous to the whole financial structure of the country and to the national energy and capital. It stepped in and said it would take for the purposes of current expenditure a certain proportion and to that extent that capital was destroyed. He did not say there should be no death duties, but he did say that to carry the principle of taxing accumulated capital to any far degree was to strike at the roots of ambition of individuals, and of the active natural energy of the people. They had no right to do that, and he thought it unwise and unsound. Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite refused to broaden the basis of taxation, and said that they would get from the little circle they had been travelling round during the last sixty years that which they needed for social reforms. The hon. Member for Blackburn said that in spite of increased exports and imports, and increased manufacturing output, the percentage of pauperism was greater than it had ever been in the history of the country, that wages were relatively lower and unemployment greater than ever before. He went on to say that at the same time there were £98,000,000 of increased taxable income in one ten years, and £230,000,000 in the last ten years. He asked what the poor had got out of that: "Neither greater employment nor improved social conditions." In the words of the *Daily News*, used after a certain election in the suburbs of London, free trade "had left them at the bottom of the abyss." That was, in effect, what the hon. Member for Blackburn had said. He was not arguing for protection at all; he was only pointing out the position in which they found themselves. It was not strictly accurate to say that this increased taxable income represented a vast increase in wealth. It was due, as the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said, to the increased stringency in the methods of collection. The Chancellor of the Exchequer shook his head, but that had been repeated over and over again in the House. They had an increased expenditure by the present Government over that of the past Government, in spite, as he believed, of the most honest efforts to reduce taxation. He did not think the Government desired to be extravagant, but they had increased the expenditure of the late Government by £3,000,000, and they had committed the country, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Worcester had said, to an increase of expenditure of £10,000,000 next year. Where were they going to find the money? They could only find it from the income-tax, the death duties, or from the breakfast table. The hon. Member for Bath considered, as he believed most of the Members on that side of the House did, that the taxes should be completely taken off the breakfast table. If that was so, the sources of taxation were limited to three — income-tax, death duties, and taxation on land. The present Government came into office—and hon. Members supported them in their view—saying the thing to do was to encourage the people to go back to the land. Three years had gone, but they had not seen very many return to the land. He did not suppose this Government would contend that they could get anything more out of the land, so that incomes and death duties were the only resources remaining. Did they think they were satisfactory resources? He thought hon. Gentlemen opposite were wrong in the view they took of taxation. It was a fact that an indirect tax was less burdensome than a direct tax. It was much easier to pay a little day by day by indirect taxes than deliberately to save in order to pay a sum at the end of the year or half year, and he thought the people of the country would rather pay by indirect than by direct taxation. He was not going into the respective merits of taxation. Hon. Members might drink their cup of joy to the full to-day, because trouble would come with succeeding years. If they proposed to get their income for national expenditure out of incomes of £5,000, they would find that any undue pressure upon any source of taxation ultimately dried it up. He could not understand the argument of the hon. Gentlemen below the gangway in favour of a graduated income-tax, which amounted to a deliberate assertion that an income of over £5,000 was necessarily too great an opulence for any one individual, and that the State had a right to step in and take an unreasonable proportion of it for national expenditure. He ventured to say that that, even in the opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had a different position to defend, was wholly untenable. He had not risen to throw cold water upon the efforts of the Government to reduce taxes. He had never believed they could very much reduce taxation. He had not risen for the purpose of throwing cold water on the old-age pension scheme. He believed both a contributory and non-contributory scheme could be run and run successfully in the country. He honestly thought, with all his desire to see the working man relieved from the pangs and miseries of old age, that a non-contributory scheme, taken by itself, would reduce the national self-respect. He did not care how small the contribution was, he believed it would conduce to the self-respect of every man who felt that he found some insurance towards his old-age pension, and he thought that hon. Members on the other side of the House would still come to think of a contributory scheme with something like acceptance. Behind it lay one of the great principles of human independence—self-respect. He did not wish to say anything disrespectful of the working class, but the dependence of class upon class was not good on the whole for the people; and he felt very strongly, while supporting an old-age pension scheme, that a contributory scheme might very easily be run parallel with a non-contributory scheme. By increasing the size of the pension under a contributory scheme, and still preserving their non-contributory scheme, they could have that stimulus to national energy, self-respect, and human independence which was so good for men and women in every class of life. He believed there was no class, no people, more strenuous, more active, than our fellow countrymen. But at the same time there was a danger which the Prime Minister, he thought, would acknowledge. He had not, as would have been noticed, made a speech in favour of a change in our fiscal system. He did not think it necessary in the circumstances. Upon occasion he could and would do it. But he wished to point out this. The Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer were steering the House and the country into an *impasse*, with their old-age pensions or the more extended scheme advocated below the gangway, and with the ever continuing increase of expenditure on the Army and Navy, Education and Civil Service, to which the only outlet was that provided by the cause and the principles which they on that side of the House advocated. The hon. Member for Blackburn had pointed out that free trade had failed absolutely. It was the choice by inference between the policy which they advocated and the policy of socialism. This country would not accept the principles laid down by the hon. Member for Blackburn, the seizure of private interests to be worked for the good of the population generally, but he was not sure that it would not advocate and accept the principle which had been put in motion by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in more than one direction since he became President of the Board of Trade, in his Patent Law and his Merchant Shipping Act. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer could show how the expenditure was to be met otherwise he would be only too glad to support him if it could be done for the good of the working classes and the trade and commerce of the country.

Mr. HARWOOD (Bolton) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the House to give very serious consideration to the speech of the hon. Member for Blackburn, not because of the particular suggestions he made, but because of the truth underlying his whole argument that the working classes of the country had not derived their fair share of the advantages of machinery and general progress. If machinery increased production as it had done in his own lifetime, say six-fold, and made things six times cheaper, the working classes either ought to have six times more commodities or six times more leisure. But they had neither, for their present condition was practically not as good as it was in the time of the Plantagenets. Apart from that, passionately as he loved free trade, not chiefly for its material advantages but for its moral justification, unless some means were found of removing this injustice free trade was in great danger. He wished to make a practical suggestion as to the way the balance sheet was presented to the nation. No private firm and no treasurers of a third rate corporation would make out the balance sheet as it was presented to the House. National expenditure meant in the mind of the public expenditure for national purposes—carrying on the Government of the country, the Army, Navy, Civil Service, and so forth. The nation carried on not only the nation but certain private businesses, for example, the Post Office, which was once carried on by private persons and might be again, and the telegraph and telephone businesses, and if the suggestions of the hon. Member for Northwich were carried out it might carry on the right hon. Gentleman's and he would be glad to see it. He asked that in the column of national expenditure they should not include the gross outgoings of these different private businesses, but keep a separate account for them and only bring forward balances. His own corporation supplied electricity, water and gas, and in offering its balance sheet it had an electricity account, a gas account and so forth, and then brought the balances forward only. The advantages would be that the nation and Parliament could see whether these different businesses paid or not, and they could make some sensible calculations as to national expenditure. The hon. Member for Preston had spoken of the national expenditure growing by £20,000,000. Everybody talked of the growth of national expenditure and they were told that it was £152,000,000 last year. He found that that included £17,000,000 on the Post Office service which was a profitable undertaking. He was told when he raised the point before that Mr. Gladstone was in favour of this scheme. No doubt he had better reasons than they could see, but he objected to being knocked over by any person's name. They had to face things as they found them now. He asked that for the sake of being able to compare national expenditure year by year they should have really national expenditure and not profitable expenditure in carrying on business. If our total outgoings jumped up by £100,000,000, people would say that the national expenditure had jumped up by £100,000,000, but it was nothing of the sort. This way of rendering the national accounts was unique, and he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would in future so render the accounts that they would be able to see how their businesses were doing, and how they were doing in regard to national expenditure. Everybody had said the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be hard up, and it looked to him rather as if he was going to be very near the line. He was afraid the Prime Minister did not realise the serious setback of business. But at any rate the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to cast about for all the means he could think of to raise money, and he asked him to return to something that was abandoned by his predecessor, and that was the export duty on coal. He did not say it was a charming thing in itself. No taxation was. There was a drawback to every tax, but this had fewer drawbacks than a great many other taxes that could be suggested to fill up the deficiency that they saw before them. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had approached other things with a free mind and he had not had the pleasure of sitting beside him so long without knowing that quality, and he thought he would look at it quite apart from the fact that both parties had given it up. Really, when he found both parties give up anything he thought he must be right. They were probably doing it for motives of winning votes and were not considering the real truth of the matter. He asked the right hon Gentleman not to be led away either by a kind of pedantic doctrinairism. There was a sort of idea that exports and products must not be taxed. But coal stood in a category by itself. It was not a manufactured product. It was a gift of which they could say, at any rate, that no more could be made when it was gone. He was not speaking from any fear of its being done up. He knew the Report of the Royal Commission and all that. He was speaking of it as a pure matter of taxation and raising revenue, and he held that the bulk of a tax on coal would be paid by the foreigner. He knew there were wails of weeping millionaires, and so forth, but as a matter of fact, the imposition of the tax did not reduce the export to any appreciable degree, and for a very good reason. The fact of the case was that the foreigner had to have our coal within certain limits even if he paid more for it. What was the case now? A cotton-spinner in Rouen could get Welsh coal cheaper than he could get it in Manchester. He would have it. He was not speaking of Welsh smokeless coal. A French syndicate was being formed lately to obtain some mines there, because there was no other known in the world at present. Why, therefore, should they part with this special gift which belonged to the nation and get nothing for it? It was said that this tax bore unequally upon certain mines, and that if they could levy it on all mines it would be different. The chief value of coal lay in its potentiality for productiveness. Even if the revenue did not gain they would get the benefit of the use of the coal at home, while, if they parted with it, they got nothing but the price. He spoke as a land reformer, and as President of the Land Nationalisation Society of Lancashire, and he was surprised that so many of his hon. friends on that side of the House who were so strong in advocating the principle of land nationalisation were so very backward in seeing how they applied in a case of this sort. The principle was this. The coal was not the absolute property of the owner of the surface, but the nation had rights in it; it partly belonged to the nation. It was partly national property. When they exported it the nation was parting with a national asset without getting anything national back for it. It gave employment—so did other things—but they did not get a national contribution. The landowner got a royalty, and the coal-miner got his wage. He did not think the Chancellor of the Exchequer would find any other tax that would contribute £2,500,000 to the Exchequer with less burden to the nation than the coal tax, and he believed it was a perfectly just plan of vindicating the principle of land nationalisation and giving the nation some benefit from its own property.

MR. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich) said the hon. Member for Bolton usually disagreed with every other section of the House, and that made his speeches interesting. There was one remark made by the hon. Member with which he could not agree. He had himself sometimes joined in the praising of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but he had never before heard anyone suggest that the right hon. Gentleman's nature was one which was likely to rise above party exigencies. To-night he thought they were in a somewhat peculiar position. This subject had now been under discussion since four o'clock and not a single Member on the opposite side had had a word to say in favour of the Budget—the most momentous that had been presented to Parliament in the experience of any Member of the House. A striking characteristic of the Budget speech of the Prime Minister was the glorification of his party on account of the reduction of the National Debt. He was perfectly at a loss to understand the ground of that jubilation. The surpluses by which alone Debt could be reduced could be obtained either by the difficult way of reducing expenditure or by the easy way of maintaining a high level of taxation. He was sure hon. Gentleman opposite expected to see the financial reforms of the Government take the shape of reduced expenditure. None of their many election promises was so definite as this—that there was to be a reduction in the extravagant scale of expenditure of their predecessors. There had been no reduction, but, on the contrary, an increase in expenditure compared with the last year in which the late Government held office. The Government had reduced the National Debt by a method open to anybody, by keeping up taxation. When the Prime Minister claimed credit for the democratic majority which sat behind him for the great sacrifices they had made in order to reduce Debt, he did not sufficiently recognise the claims of other parties. Some part of the credit should be given to the Nationalist Party. If they had accepted the Home-Rule-by-instalments Bill some part at least of the funds which had been available for the reduction of Debt would have been absorbed. Again, the House of Lords deserved some credit. But for them several millions would not have been available, but would have been absorbed in expenditure under the name of education. The two outstanding features of the Budget were the proposals for old-age pensions and the reduction of the sugar duty. Both of these proposals were popular. It was intended to be a popular Budget, and perhaps it was. So far as he could see, it was framed for one object, and one only, viz., to stop the rot which had set in the constituencies against the present Government. A great deal could be said for either of these proposals by itself, but he did not see how it was possible to justify them taken in conjunction. What was the position in which the Budget left the finances of the country? The Budget of this year had committed the country to a payment of £6,000,000 on old-age pensions, but only a little more than £1,000,000 had been provided in this Budget to meet that increased expenditure. A year hence an additional sum of nearly five millions would have to be provided, but the question of how it was to be met had not been faced. A Budget of that kind was entirely new. There had never before been, in their whole Parliamentary history, a case where the Chancellor of the Exchequer had deliberately imposed a burden upon the country without at the same time honestly and openly facing the means by which that Budget would have to be carried out. The strongest condemnation of the Budget was to be found in the speeches made by the Prime Minister himself last year. Twelve months ago the Prime Mimister laid it down that nowadays, in view of the fiscal and social obligations in front of the country, it was impossible to treat the Budget of a single year as a thing by itself; one must regard it as a whole and look several years ahead. Speaking of the sugar duty, he said that in the two or three years for which the Government expected to be responsible for the affairs of the Exchequer he could see no prospect of any diminution in the national revenue. What a difference had twelve months made. What was the explanation? The right hon. Gentleman's horizon now was much more limited. Apparently he scarcely looked beyond the effect on the next bye-election wherever it might be. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Oh, oh."] How could they justify the tone adopted by the Prime Minister twelve months ago with the actual adoption of this Budget? It was not merely an additional £5,000,000 of expenditure to which the country was being pledged. The Prime Minister had definitely committed the country to additional expenditure. He had emphatically declared that if the German naval shipbuilding programme which had been introduced this year looked next year like being carried out, we should have a shipbuilding programme in this country. Why the right hon. Gentleman had postponed the matter till next year was one of the mysteries which no one but the right hon. Gentleman could explain. The experience of the two previous German programmes afforded no ground for anticipating that the present programme would not be carried out. Then if the ships built under our programme were to put to sea for the purpose for which they were built we should not need the ships alone; there must be a naval dockyard in the North Sea to which they could repair. He believed that the figure of £10,000,000 was an under-estimate of the expenditure which would be involved. It was a time when these inevitable obligations were in front of us which had been selected for reducing the sugar duty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would find himself tremendously handicapped by reason of his predecessor's scientific economics. It was not merely that the Prime Minister was an expert in economic science in the sense of having absorbed the learning of other people; he was an original thinker on the subject. During the short time the right hon. Gentleman was Chancellor of the Exchequer, he had laid down a completely new system of economics. It was remarkable for many things, but chiefly so for its extreme flexibility. In 1906 he told the House he was going to take a penny off the tea duty, because, of all reductions, that was one which must inevitably accrue at once to the benefit of the consumer. In 1907 he told them he could not do that, because it was a reduction which would not reach the consumer. Then there was the sugar duty. Last year the right hon. Gentleman told them there was no use in taking off part of that duty because it could not possibly benefit the consumer. This year he told them that, after further examination, he believed the whole of the reduction would reach the consumer. That was a great advantage to any Chancellor of the Exchequer, but it was not exactly the science of economics. It was the economics of the politician. No doubt all sections in the House would like to see the sugar duty reduced, but on one condition—namely, that they were satisfied that something more objectionable would not be substituted. He admitted that the duty was open to many great disadvantages, but it was easy to exaggerate them. For instance, it had been claimed that, because sugar was the raw material of some industries, it therefore suffered on account of the duty. He could not see how trades which used sugar suffered in any degree from the duty except to the extent to which the consumption of its products was diminished through the duty. The complaint he made of the action of the Government on all these questions was that they would not look at them on their merits, but settled them on what they thought to be the right theory. He would take as an illustration the coal duty. As a matter of fact, when that duty was imposed he was not in favour of it, and he helped a little in getting some concessions at that time; but it seemed to him that the arguments that could be adduced against the imposition of the duty were not nearly so strong when the duty had been imposed and the trade had become accustomed to it. The time to take off the duty was when it was evident it was imposing a severe burden on the coal trade; but during the whole time the Government had been in office the trade had been unusually flourishing, and the price of coal unusually high. When other taxation was pressing so heavily on the country it was the height of folly to take off a duty which was not felt in the trade, and when the effect of so doing was inevitably to raise the price of coal both to the home consumer and the other industries dependent on it. Precisely the same thing, to some extent, applied to sugar. As it happened, since this Government had come into office nearly every article of general consumption had risen to very high prices. Sugar now, owing, as he thought, partly to the Convention which the Government did so much to oppose in Opposition and which they were now doing all they could, so far as they could without breaking their pledges to their followers, to retain, was not at a high price. Therefore, the duty was not pressing heavily on the trade now, and whether or not they ought to be in favour of the duty depended altogether on what was the substitute the Government intended to give them. That was the crucial point of the Budget. The Prime Minister had not faced the new obligations he imposed on the country, but he had made two suggestions as to the way in which they might be met. The first was that there should be a diminution in the contribution to the reduction of the Debt. He did not say that it might not be possible to reduce that contribution in certain circumstances, but that was a change which the House of Commons ought to be very slow to sanction, and to sanction only with very great cause. What was the ground on which the Prime Minister suggested that a change might be made? He said that by the end of the year the deadweight Debt would be reduced to the level at which it stood in 1889. He did not think that was quite accurate. As a matter of fact the right hon. Gentleman's obligations would be £60,000,000 greater than in 1889. But suppose that account was drawn upon even to the extent and on the same basis that it was left by Mr. Goschen. Even then the surplus was not large. It was true the reduction estimated in the Debt this year was £15,000,000, but of that £4,000,000 represented last year's surplus, which would not be available next year. The amount available would be only £11,000,000, and the reduction by Mr. Goschen was between £7,000,000 and £8,000,000. Even on that basis there would be only a margin of £3,000,000. But he maintained that the conditions now were very different from those of twenty years ago. It was admitted on all sides that the financial credit of a country was one of the great factors on which success in war must depend. The importance was relative to that of the country with whom the struggle was conducted. It would be admitted that the relative wealth of this country was not what it was twenty years ago; it was matter of general opinion that London was not now the centre of the world's money market as it was then. [Cries of "No, no."] It was generally admitted, and in any case it was the fact. [Cries of "No, no."] The test of credit was not, of course, the amount of debt, but the price at which national securities stood. He had tried to find the relative prices of British and German securities twenty years ago, but had not been able to go further back than 1894. In that year the lowest price quoted for German 3 per cents. was 85, and the price now was 81, a fall of 4. In the same year the lowest price for Consols was 97½, and now it was 86½. [AN HON. MEMBER: They are 2½ per cent.] He had not kept that out of view. Although our price was still better than Germany's relatively, our position was not so good as it was in 1894. Another test of strength was the taxable resources of a country. It was surprising to hear the Prime Minister in a complacent manner speak of Germany borrowing while we paid off debt. What were the facts? The direct taxation per head of the German population, taxation of individual States as well as Imperial, was 8s. as against 18s. in the United Kingdom. Indirect taxation was in Germany 26s. per head, and in the United Kingdom 48s. per head of the population. Taking the two sources together, the burden on the people of this country was twice as heavy. He had not the figures of local taxation, but everybody knew that the rates levied in the United Kingdom were enormously heavier than the rates in Germany. It was evident, then, that the untaxed resources of Germany were greater than ours. [AN HON. MEMBER: Why do they borrow?] Germany had one disadvantage from a financial point of view as compared with this country—the unification of Germany was not complete. But that disadvantage would disappear under strain of war and stress of national danger; the resources were there, and if required would be available to meet the national needs. Even of that advantage which we enjoyed there were hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial benches, who would deprive us, by giving Home Rule to Ireland, and, for all he knew, to Scotland and Wales. The facts and figures showed that a great change had taken place since 1889, and the amount of reduction adequate then was not adequate now, and we ought to persevere more than the Prime Minister suggested in still further reducing the National Debt. The Prime Minister had made another suggestion for meeting these liabilities which he thought was much more alarming than the prospect of raiding the Sinking Fund. There was a difference on all questions of social reform between those who sat around him and those who sat below the gangway. The hon. Member for Blackburn had proposed that the needs of the poorer class should be supplied entirely by the taxation of the richer class. The Unionist Party also desired to see the condition of the people improved, but in their view the difference between socialism and social reform was simply the way in which it was to be paid for. They proposed that it should be paid for by all classes in proportion to their means; hon. Members below the gangway proposed that the money should be raised from one class entirely for the benefit of another class. That was what they objected to. The attack made on the Government by the hon. Member for Blackburn was entirely unjustified. In his opinion, by this Budget, and by the speech of the Prime Minister, in which he suggested that the increased revenue should be raised from the death duties and the income-tax, the Government had definitely placed themselves on the side of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. From their point of view they were perfectly right. There was no other means by which they could get their revenue. The speech of the Prime Minister clearly indicated that even that source of revenue was not without its limits. He pointed out that by making the income-tax a little lower there had been a great increase in its produce, but evidently the reverse effect might happen. If they strained any particular form of taxation to the point at which it seemed to be unjust and confiscation, they would dry up the source of revenue. He was not going to answer the speech of the hon. Member for Blackburn now. The time must come when speeches of that kind would have to be met and answered, but they had not got that length yet. He would, however, point out that the idea that there was an inexhaustible fund available for the benefit of the working class was a sheer delusion. It all rested on a fundamental fallacy. Hon. Members who held that view did not take into account the effect which individualities had in the creation of wealth. The Duke of Wellington once said that the presence of Napoleon on the battlefield was worth 100,000 men. The difference between individuals had to be taken into account in industry as well as in war. The Government had thrown themselves definitely on the side of hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. That was a clear issue and he was not sorry that it had been raised. The issue which would be decided at the next election was whether the increased fund for meeting these social reforms should be raised by confiscation or by a change in our fiscal policy.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: The hon. Member who has just sat down indulged in what we always expect now from hon. Gentlemen opposite—a great eulogy of Germany. German finance, German taxation, German old-age pensions are all better than our own. But there was one thing that he did not take the trouble to explain—why Germany, who has been experimenting for years with old-age pensions, is only able to find £2,500,000, whereas we are finding £6,000,000. [Opposition cries of "No."] If hon. Members will just wait I will point out that we are going to find £6,000,000. Germany is borrowing £10,000,000 a year for shipbuilding, whereas we are building our ships out of revenue. [Opposition cries of "We are not building them yet."] Our Fleet is as three or four to one compared with the German Fleet. The hon. Member has not thought it necessary to explain to the House what the distinction is. They have got in Germany the perfect system which the hon. Gentleman looks forward to, and yet they are borrowing for the current expenditure of the year. The hon. Gentleman endeavoured to explain that by saying it had something to do with their Imperial system. Surely if Germany wants to raise this money there is nothing in her system to prevent her doing so if her Legislature wishes it. There is no limit to their powers. But before I accept the hon. Gentleman's figures for Germany I should like to ask whether he has taken into account that a good deal of expenditure there, as upon education, for instance, is State expenditure instead of Imperial expenditure. Has he taken that into account?

Mr. BONAR LAW: Yes. I said distinctly that the taxation included not only Imperial taxation, but State taxation.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Then all I can say is that that is not the information I have got in regard to Germany, and I shall have another opportunity of scrutinising his figures. At the beginning of his speech the hon. Member complained that every speech made in the course of this debate had been a speech made rather in criticism than in defence of the Budget. His experience of Parliamentary debates will lead him to the same conclusion as my own—namely, that those in favour of a proposition put forward by the Government do not think it necessary always to get up one after another just to say that they approve of it. On the contrary, the more they approve of it the less they say, because they want to get it through. It is only when he has a criticism to offer that a Member gets up. If the hon. Gentleman thinks that this Budget does not command the approval and support of hon. Members on this side of the House he can put the question to the test in a very effective way. I wonder whether he will care to do it! After his speech I am at a loss to know why he objects to he Budget. Does he object to old-age pensions? No; then he approves of that part of the Budget. But he suggested that this was one of the numerous promises at the last election. The hon. Member will remember that another Government were lavish in promises, and their promises included old-age pensions. That was ten years ago. The one difference, or rather one of the differences, between that Government and the present is that whereas this Government has made a colossal effort to redeem its promise, the former Government did not redeem its promise up to the very hour of its demise. It left the promise, on the strength of which it secured the suffrages of the majority of the people of this country, to be redeemed by us.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The right hon. Gentleman persists in saying that the late Government promised old-age pensions. That is completely unjustified.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I should have thought the right hon. Gentleman would have been the very last to deny it. He might have left it to some of his colleagues, because if any part of the country is more responsible for that promise than another it is the neighbourhood of Birmingham.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: It was just because I supposed the Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to my right hon. friend the Member for West Birmingham that I took the opportunity of denying his statement. My right hon. friend himself denied the statement in this House and justified his denial in the very speech to which the Prime Minister has referred.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I should be sorry to say a word in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, and, therefore, I will pass to the promise made by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. He went to the electors of East Manchester with a card: "Vote for Balfour and Old-Age Pensions." If that is not a definite promise by a statesman of his position, I do not know what a promise means. At this time of day I should not have thought it was possible to challenge that. But the right hon. Gentleman opposite says it was not a promise. These refutations are coming ten years too late. The hon. Member who has just spoken says this is merely an electioneering dodge to stop the rot in the constituencies. I think it has done a good deal to stop the rot that is talked in the constituencies about free trade finance having been exhausted, and I think hon. and right hon. Gentlemen are beginning to discover that. A second objection to this Budget is that we are not making provision for the payment of Debt.

Mr. BONAR LAW: No, I did not say that.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Let us see what the position is. In the course of the two years we have been in office we have made provision, including the arrangements of the present financial year, for wiping off £41,000,000 of the national liabilities, and when I use that word I am including all the liabilities of the nation—not merely the permanent Debt, but all the other liabilities for increasing the liabilities of the nation. And that is rather an important distinction. Because the late Government used to make provision at the beginning of the year for a liberal Sinking Fund to wipe off £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 of the National Debt, and then proceeded to increase the liabilities. In one year they started with a provision of £11,000,000 or £12,000,000 for payment of Debt, and at the end of the year, having raised money for other purposes, they were £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 to the bad. The present Prime Minister has made provision for wiping off £41,000,000 of the national liabilities of the country in three years. What provision did the late Government make for wiping off Debt during the ten years they were in office? I am not referring to the war. I give up the war. That was a little accident. I give them credit for the special provision they made during their last three years of office for the purpose of reducing the war debt. During the whole of their ten years of office they only reduced the National Debt by £22,000,000; during our three years we have wiped off nearly twice as much. The right hon. Member for East Worcestershire referred to the raiding of the Sinking Fund by previous Chancellors of the Exchequer. Very wisely he avoided the precedent of 1899, but I cannot allow him to forget 1899. At that time there was no prospect of war. The income-tax was fairly high—it had gone up from 6d. to 8d. in a time of peace. The Sinking Fund was reduced, not because Consols were high, but because he did not want to increase the taxes of the country. In the words of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer he did not feel justified in increasing the taxation. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "If I do not reduce the amount applicable to the reduction of Debt I shall have to impose taxation both direct and indirect."

The reason he assigned for the raiding of the Sinking Fund was the avoidance of taxation. There was no special provision for social reform, and there was no justification except that he did not want to increase the taxation of the country. Having raided the Sinking Fund to the extent of £2,000,000, and having already reduced it by £3,000,000, Mr. Goschen proceeded to borrow something like £2,500,000 to £3,000,000 altogether. That is a proceeding which I commend to the right hon. Gentleman the next time he speaks upon the Budget. I should really like to have his defence upon it. Now the right hon. Gentleman said we have been exceptionally lucky, and he rather suggested that the fact of Consols being so low is really attributable to the present Government, and there is a great financial party on the other side who seem to accept that suggestion. What happened? The price of Consols had been 106 in 1899.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London): One hundred and eleven.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am taking the figure the year before the war, when it was a little over 106. When the right hon. Gentleman left office it had come down from 111 to eighty-nine—that is, twenty-two points. Consols are now eighty-seven.

SIR F. BANBURY: Eighty-six.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Very well, say eighty-six. They dropped twenty-two points under the finance of the right hon. Gentleman and his predecessors; they have dropped three points since. ["Oh, oh."] I am answering the point made by the right hon. Gentleman. He said that not even the finance of the late Government could have reduced Consols to the present point. I am pointing out that it was the finance of the late Government that did depress Consols. The hon. Member for Preston and some Members on the other side appealed to me not to raid the Sinking Fund. Well, I agree that it is a serious responsibility for any Chancellor of the Exchequer not to make proper provision for the reduction of Debt. But my hon. friend must bear in mind that during the three years of the present Government provision has been made which is absolutely unexampled for the reduction of Debt, although attempts have been made on the other side to prove that it is purely an accident. I know. Those accidents always happen when Liberal Governments are in power. I was looking through the reduction of the Debt this morning, and I found two or three very good years, 1893–4–5—purely an accident. Mr. Gladstone reduced the Debt by huge sums of money—I suppose that was an accident. In the last three years of the right hon. Gentleman opposite the net reduction of the war debt was something like £9,000,000. The reduction in three years under a Liberal Government is £41,000,000—purely an accident. I think there is a justification for a Liberal Government that can bring such fortunate accidents to the credit of the country. But I want my hon. friends to bear that in mind when we consider the finance of next year. This is not an opportunity for me to expound the Budget of next year, and I cannot go into a profit and loss account and tell the House what I propose to do. It would be unwise, even if I had made up my mind. What is the good of adding another year of torture to the victims of next year? This much I will say, however, that a criticism has been passed upon the Prime Minister's Budget which, I think, is an unfair one—namely, that he has provided for a liability of £6,000,000 without at the same time making any provision for meeting it. How could he? It is not a liability for this year, but for next year. He has provided for all the liability which falls in this year. It is true that next year you have a liability of six, and possibly seven, millions—for it is very largely conjectural. Very well, it will be for the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the time being to meet that. The hon. Member said it was absolutely without precedent to bring in further liability and not to make any provision for meeting it. It would be still more without precedent for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to deliver not merely his own Budget, but the Budget of his successor next year, and indicate the taxes he would put on. But this I can assure the hon. Member and the House, that the resources of civilisation are not yet exhausted, and the resources of free trade finance are not exhausted. Another point made by the right hon. Gentleman was that we had not redeemed the pledges of reduced expenditure and economy. My recollection is that we gave pledges not to reduce expenditure, but only to reduce expenditure upon armaments. I do not think it is possible for you to give general pledges of reduced expenditure, and I will tell the hon. Member why. We certainly contemplated old-age pensions, an improved educational system, and social reform generally, and we could not possibly have given pledges for a reduced expenditure when we contemplated social reform which involved increased expenditure. What we did promise—and it is a promise which we have gone a certain way to redeem, but not as far as I should like, not as far as I hope we shall travel along that road—what we did promise was, I think, to do our best to reduce the Army and Navy expenditure. And we have done it. In the last few years the money which the late Government used to borrow we have put on the current expenditure of the year. The Army and Navy expenditure has been reduced by £5,000,000 or £6,000,000. That is a very considerable reduction to be effected in two or three years, and I hope to see further reductions. We are therefore doing our best to redeem the promises that we gave in respect of economy. Where do the increases arise? In the Post Office, which is largely automatic and productive; and I hope under the able administration of my right hon. friend there will be more economy as well as more reproduction. Then there is an increase in the Education Vote, and an increase this year of £1,500,000 in respect of old-age pensions. But these are increases we have all contemplated, and in respect of which we had given pledges, and, therefore, as far as that criticism is concerned it has no basis at all in fact. The hon. Member for Preston was very severe as to the borrowing of money for telegraphs and telephones and he appealed to our experience in buying furniture on the hire system. The only thing I have bought on the hire system is the "Encyclopædia Britannica." That was my experience of the hire system, and it has justified completely the criticism of my hon. friend. It is a bad financial system, and induces you to buy things which in reality you are far better without. My hon. friend reminded me that borrowing on the telegraphs and the telephones is not a new system. There have been three Bills nd we have always borrowed for the telegraphs. After all, the telegraph system is productive, and there is a profit made out of it. It is, therefore, in a different category from borrowing for the purposes of the Army and Navy. The local authorities do it; in a business establishment you do it, and any system which is conducted on pure business principles involves the borrowing of money on things like the telegraphs and the telephones. But I do not in the slightest degree underrate the seriousness of my hon. friend's criticism, and I will bear it in mind. I do not propose to enter into any length on the criticisms of the old-age pension scheme at this stage. The Bill will be, I hope, circulated in two or three days, and the Second Reading stage of the measure will be the proper opportunity to raise detailed criticism upon it. The right hon. Gentleman said that we did wisely to start the age at seventy; but he pleaded in the first instance for a thrift test. That question was carefully considered by the Government, and we came to the conclusion after very mature consideration that it was a very difficult test to apply, unless you have a contributory scheme. If you have a contributory scheme, you have a test ready made. But we came to the conclusion that a contributory scheme would not work in this country—because, after all, this country is not like Germany. The conditions are quite different; labour is much more mobile here, and there are other reasons which go to the root of the difficulty. But once you dismiss a contributory system from your minds, it is very difficult to apply a thrift test. It is bound to become arbitrary. Who is to administer it? Who is to sit in judgment upon a man as to whether he has been thrifty or improvident? Is it a magistrate? Then the whole community are at the mercy of the local Bench, or at least they will think so. The right hon. Gentleman said, Are you really going to pension a drunkard, the man who has been drunk all his life? Well, if he has been drunk all his life the chance of his living to seventy years is a very poor one, and, from the point of view of a contributory system, I know of no man who has contributed more lavishly to the national revenue. Therefore, I think that rather from that point of view the right hon. Gentleman might put in a word for him. But really that is a very exceptional case. The kind of man who has got to that stage is as a rule the man you will find in the workhouse. The right hon. Gentleman put in a very strong, pathetic, and eloquent appeal for old couples. I have only one word to say to criticism of the kind which involves increased expenditure. I want the House to remember that this case of old couples will only be one out of several cases. There are many appeals which can be made to the Government to apply their money to other hard cases, but I want the House to remember that this is a beginning; it is an experiment. The expenditure will be at the least £6,000,000. In my judgment it will be more; that is my firm conviction. Not, perhaps, in the first year, but the second year I am certain it will be more unless I am very much mistaken, and I have gone into the figures very carefully. I therefore appeal to the House not, at the beginning at any rate, unduly to extend the area. The case of the old couple is not nearly as hard as the right hon. Gentleman seems to imagine. The case of the old man or the old woman who is alone is that, undoubtedly, of a man or woman who is probably being maintained by relatives. That is not the case with the old couple. It is a case, as a rule, of old people living together in a cottage, not, as a rule, maintained by their relatives. There rent comes in as an element, and after all rent is the same for a couple as for one. But if the House presses too hard for the extension of the scheme, and cuts out all these limitations, it will go far beyond the revenue which the Government can possibly provide, at any rate in the near future. This is the only answer I can make to these hard cases that are pressed upon us; but I do protest against the word "penalising" used by the right hon. Gentleman opposite. How can he use a word of that kind when, at any rate, we are providing better for these old couples than anybody has done before? At present their lot is to receive half-a-crown or 3s. a week, accompanied frequently by a loaf of bread. We, at any rate, are offering to them 7s. 6d. a week. That is not penalising them; it is improving their lot by 100 per cent.; and it really is not fair that, when we have put forward a scheme which will cost from £6,000,000 to £7,000,000 a year to provide for people over seventy years of age, we should be charged with penalising them and treating them unfairly, harshly, and cruelly. I do not think it is fair to a Government that brings forward proposals like these. With another criticism I am rather disposed to sympathise. I think the right hon. Gentleman said that in Germany they make provision for the infirm and sick, and he seemed to attach more importance to that than to the direct provision for old age. I am disposed to agree with him. There may, I think, be many cases of young people who have broken down with family cares, which are much harder than even cases of old people; and I hope that in the future the Government—whether this Government or some other, I do not know—will take cases of that kind into account. At the present moment sufficient unto us is it to provide £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 for old-age pensions. I now come to the criticisms advanced by the hon. Member for Blackburn. His speech divided itself into two parts. The first part was rather too much flavoured with vinegar, and I do not think he helped the subject forward by the undue acridity of his criticisms upon our scheme. After all, we have undertaken to find £6,000,000 for old-age pensions; we are reducing the burden of taxation upon the poorer classes by £3,500,000—that is, we are undertaking to face the loss of something like £10,000,000 in the direction which the hon. Member desires us to travel. The hon. Member evidently thinks that is a case upon which to make an acrimonious and rather sour attack on the Government. Sourness and Socialism are really not necessarily concomitants. In the second part of his speech he made many suggestions which will be valuable, no doubt, to future Chancellors of the

Exchequer as to methods of increasing revenue. For the moment I think we can do with a great deal less, and I cannot usefully or instructively, at the present stage, embark upon a discussion of his suggestions in regard to the death duties, super tax, and matters of that kind, but they are all suggestions which I shall have to consider very carefully in the course of the year and I shall take note of the very valuable suggestions he has made with regard to the method of raising revenue. My hon. friend the Member for Bolton made a very earnest appeal to me to put on the coal tax. I know that the usual criticism of those in favour of the coal tax is based on Cardiff coal. Well, Welsh coal, like everything else Welsh, is of most exceptional quality, and therefore it can very readily command a market. But, after all, that does not apply to coal in other parts of the United Kingdom, and the effect of putting an export tax on some parts of the kingdom was practically to exclude coal of the second qualities from the markets where there was was any competition. Cardiff had to compete with Westphalian and French coal, so that the effect was felt on the cheaper class of even Cardiff coal. In some parts of Monmouthshire it certainly had a detrimental effect on the market. Scotland suffered very considerably, and the same thing applies to Northumberland and the Midlands. Therefore it is not fair to quote Cardiff smokeless coal as if that were really the test. However, it is beyond the realm of practical politics, and I doubt if the hon. Member would find a seconder for his proposition, not even in the hon. Member for Preston, who is generally engaged in these forlorn hopes. A very weighty criticism was made by the right hon. Member for Rushcliffe, and I regret that there was not a larger attendance to hear him, especially of my colleagues, because it was addressed rather to them than to the House of Commons. He made a very strong appeal for economy, especially in military armaments. It was a very useful appeal, and I hope that it will carry weight in the proper quarters. A good deal has been done in the last two or three years, and I do not despair of more being accomplished in the coming year. When so much has to be done in the way of social reform—and here I agree absolutely with the hon. Member for Blackburn as to the poverty, distress, and misery prevailing not merely in this country, but throughout the whole of Europe and in all the old countries—it does seem a piece of gigantic folly that we should be spending hundreds of millions a year on machinery for blowing each other's brains out. One of the first things told me at the Treasury was that Lord Randolph Churchill resigned because the Army and Navy expenditure was likely to aggregate £31,000,000, and I was told, "The first thing you must do is to find £60,000,000." That is an increase of £30,000,000 in twenty years. I do not know if we get any advantage from it. [Cries of "No."] It is simply this mad competition for which we are just as responsible as any other country in the world. I am not sure, really, that in many respects we have not forced the pace, especially in the matter of shipbuilding. The result is that we are helping to frighten other countries and there is an undue nervousness of each other which is quite as responsible for the increase in armaments as anything else—this distrust, this fear, and this idea that if one country has anything, other countries are preparing to seize it. We think that Germany is preparing to attack us and Germany thinks that we are preparing to attack her. And the result is that the Press in both countries is doing its very best to work up this feeling of panic. Within the few years in the compass of my Parliamentary life, we have increased the expenditure of this country by what would be more than sufficient to provide an old-age pension for every man over sixty-five and to provide a fund for the sick and unemployed as well. Now I think really it is a very serious matter, and I agree there absolutely with the right hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division. But the House of Commons is just as responsible for this as the Government. I have sat during many Army and Navy debates in this House, and what is the experience of every Minister? The bulk of the people who are interested in the finances of the country are not present, but you get men who are specially interested in some branch of the Services, and each gets up to urge some fresh expenditure, and Ministers who are connected with the Treasury find that there is no one present as a friend of economy. The result is that inevitably expenditure goes up. The House of Commons itself ought to take a matter of this kind in hand. If they do not—and here I agree absolutely with the hon. Member for Dulwich—there are only two ways of providing for social reform. One is reducing expenditure, the other is increasing taxation. If you do not reduce expenditure, you must inevitably provide increased taxation, and if increased taxation has to be provided, and I have some hopes that it will not be necessary, I do not agree with the criticisms of hon. Gentlemen opposite that the resources of free trade finance are at an end. The wealth of this country is enormous. It is not merely great, but it is growing at a gigantic pace, and I do not think it is too much to expect the more favoured part of the community who have got riches so great that they have really to spend a good part of their time in thinking how to spend them, to make a substantial contribution to improve the lot of the poorer members of the same community to which they belong, because it is their interest after all that they should not belong to a country where there is so much poverty and distress side by side with gigiantic wealth.

*Mr. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): I desire to make one or two observations in relation to old-age pensions. I have nothing whatever to add to the criticism offered by my right hon. friend who spoke this afternoon generally on the Budget, except to say that I think the right hon. Gentleman opposite has entirely failed to answer his criticism in any way whatever. It is quite true that the right hon. Gentleman spoke of what had been accomplished by the Government in relation to the reduction of Debt, but he cannot deny the enormous commitments of the present Government—the great liabilities to which they have been pledged and the absolute lack of any provision whatever in this Budget to meet them. That was the gravamen of the of the charge of my right hon. friend. It is that which constitutes what he describes as reckless finance, and I have not heard a single word in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to disprove it, although we have had his assurance for what it may be worth that the resources of free trade finance are not yet exhausted. If I may turn for a moment to the question of old-age pensions, I shall begin by noticing the extraordinary speech which we heard from the hon. Member for Blackburn. As I understood his complaint, it was not that the scheme of the Government would not do something to help the poorer classes, but that it would not make a single rich man in the country poorer than he is at the present moment. That appears to be the charge of the hon. Gentleman against the scheme of the Government. I thought his charge consistent with the mode in which he suggested that the pensions should be paid for. How were they to be paid for according to the hon. Member? By a tax of 10 per cent. imposed on 16,000 people in this country out of 42,000,000 with incomes amounting to what he estimated at £200,000,000 a year. The hon. Member seems to think that that would be a perfectly equitable mode of dealing with this question. Such is the policy—I think I might almost call it the morality—of a representative Member of the Labour Party in a country where it has hitherto been our boast—and I hope it will continue to be—that equal and impartial justice shall at least be administered to all. Although that is the view of the hon. Member, I shall be very loth to believe that in the statements he made he represents the working classes of the country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said—and I agree with him—that there would be a far better opportunity of dealing with the question of old-age pensions in detail when we have the Bill before us, but, like my right hon. friend, I am greatly disappointed that the question of contributory pensions has been ruled out altogether by the Government. I am more sorry even for something else. The right hon. Gentleman has discovered—it is a recent discovery on his part—that the question of thrift is so difficult that it is almost impossible to be dealt with. I had the advantage of serving on a Committee in 1899 with the right hon. Gentleman, and I am going to remind him of a paragraph which has been quoted already this afternoon bearing directly on this question. I do so because I hope before we come to consider the Bill itself he will be able possibly to reconsider the judgment he has passed on that part of the question, and to go back to the older, and what I think the better, opinion expressed in the paragraph. In paragraph 49 of the Report of the Committee there occurs this passage—

> "In dealing with this question there are two considerations which we think should always be borne in mind. One is the painful position and of hardship of many of the poor who are deserving but who cannot help themselves and who are relegated in their closing years either to inadequate out-door relief, or still more distasteful shelter in the workhouse. The other is the marked development in many of the poorer classes to make provision for themselves, and the problem to be solved is how to reconcile two different objects which may appear to be conflicting. In other words, how to devise a means of making kinder and more humane provision for the one class, without doing anything to discourage the laudable efforts of the other."

The Committee laid down the problem in those words. They go on to say—

> "We hope and we believe that that may be done by the proposals which we make."

What were these proposals? One of the conditions of the receipt of a pension was this—

> "That the claimant has endeavoured to the best of his ability by his industry, or by the exercise of reasonable providence to make provision for himself and those immediately dependent upon him; and further, with reference to the exercise of reasonable providence, we think that the authorities should be bound to take into consideration how far it has been shown either by membership of a benefit society over a period of years, or by the endeavour of the applicant to make some provision for his own support by means of investments in some other definite form of thrift."

There was no difficulty about it in those days, for the first two paragraphs were unanimously agreed to by the Committee without any division whatever. The whole Committee had no doubt about it; and I do not think it is a sufficient explanation that the right hon. Gentleman should, after a departure from his old position, only tell the House of Commons that the test of thrift is found exceedingly difficult. It is not more difficult to-day than it was a few years ago, and I expect—we are all entitled to expect—that we shall receive some better reason and explanation of this complete departure by the right hon. Gentleman from his own report. One or two other words and I am done. The question of character, which was one of the four categories into which the conditions were laid down to qualify for a pension have been very lightly dealt with. On that question the Prime Minister said: "The less said about it the better." We have heard nothing more from the right hon. Gentleman. I asked this question at the close of the debate on the Budget, because I thought it was an admirable illustration of the mistake the Government were making. I repeat the question again, the more so because it has been raised by my right hon. friend and a most unsatisfactory answer has been given. Here you call upon the brewers to make a most unheard of sacrifice in order to diminish drunkenness in the country. I put the question to the Prime Minister and I repeat it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If you are really desirous of diminishing drunkenness in this country, do you or do you not mean to give to a man who is notorious for his habits of drinking a pension in order to enable him to drink more than he was able to do before? That is a question which has to be answered in the course of these debates, and I am sorry that the right hon. Gentleman has not taken the opportunity of dealing with it to-night. In regard to this question of ascertaining character and the difficulty of doing it, the right hon. Gentleman must remember—I could read to him paragraphs on that point from the Report to which he has agreed and nothing has occurred to change people's opinion since then—the right hon. Gentleman forgets that there have been vast numbers of old-age pensions—[Ironical MINISTERIAL cheers]—given by the Charity Commissioners—[MINISTERIAL cries of "By the State."] I gather to the extent of nearly a million at the present time. The Charity Commissioners were examined before this Committee and they were unanimous in saying that there was not the slightest difficulty in the world in ascertaining the character and repute of those receiving pensions, and all worked as smoothly as possible. A good deal has been said by the Prime Minister with regard to old-age pensions in New Zealand. It is made a special condition there that the applicants must prove that they have been sober for five years before they are entitled to a pension. There appears to be no difficulty on that point in New Zealand. Here, in England, we have a test of thrift, of character, of good conduct in the past, and, as in New Zealand, it has been regularly applied for years without the slightest difficulty. The only reason given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for this new and entire departure from his own proposals is that it is difficult. I hope before the debates are concluded we shall have a better explanation than that.

MR. GUEST (Cardiff District) said he had no desire to delay the Committee coming to a division. He had not had the opportunity of listening to the whole debate, but judging by the speeches he had heard from the Opposition side of the House, the main difficulty in regard to the Budget presented by the Prime Minister was that the present Chancellor of the Exchequer had a large commitment which he was quite unable to meet, and the various arrangements which had been made as to the rate of the Sinking Fund. The Debt charge at the present time was £28,000,000 and the total net liability of the State £696,000,000. In 1875, when Sir Stafford Northcote negotiated his Budget, the total State liability was £769,000,000, nearly £75,000,000 more than the present Debt. The provision for reduction of Debt which Sir Stafford Northcote thought necessary in that year was £28,000,000. But at that time the State was paying 3 per cent. instead of the 2½ per cent. we paid now; therefore that £28,000,000 represented no larger sum than would at the present time be represented by £25,000,000. The next comparison was that to be drawn between the present year and 1899, when Sir M. Hicks Beach was Chancellor of the Exchequer. The total net liability at that time was £634,000,000 and Sir M. Hicks Beach thought £23,000,000 a year was sufficient to allocate for the reduction of Debt. In 1899 Consols stood at £111, whilst to-day they were at £86. That £23,000,000, therefore, represented a reduction far less than would be represented by the same amount at the present time. A further comparison in which he had great faith was that between the year 1903 and the present year. In 1903 the late Lord (then Mr.) Ritchie was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Debt had risen to £790,000,000 owing to the charge incurred for the war. Mr. Ritchie thought it necessary to increase the debt charge to £27,000,000 and at the time he made that change he pointed out that the amount he proposed to allocate was sufficient because it was capable of paying off the entire Debt in fifty years. If they compared the £790,000,000 of 1903 with the £696,000,000 of the present year it was perfectly obvious that if £27,000,000 was enough to pay the former in fifty years the £28,000,000 now devoted to the Sinking Fund would pay off a smaller Debt in a much shorter time. Then it was to be remembered that the whole of the Debt was not held by the public, and therefore there was a portion which it was not within the range of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to purchase. A certain proportion was held by public departments. In 1899 public departments held £162,000,000, leaving only £358,000,000 in the hands of the public. It had been the recognised principle of all Chancellors of the Exchequer that the sum set aside for the reduction of Debt should be in a definite proportion not to the whole of the Debt, but to that proportion which could be purchased in the market. Mr. Ritchie said that his figure was capable of reducing the whole of the National Debt in fifty years. If so, the proportion that could be purchased in the market would be reduced in a shorter period. He merely gave these figures because his right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been challenged by hon. and right hon Gentlemen opposite. It had been pointed out by them that his right hon. friend had been committed to the principle of old-age pensions, and that no provision had been made to meet that charge. But if he had made his point clear it would be seen that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be more than justified on all previous precedents in reducing the Debt charge from £28,000,000 to £24,000,000. Without going to the best of all precedents the right hon. Gentleman had £4,000,000 which he could take from the Debt charge without risking the national credit or sacrificing the interest on the Debt. If that were true it put a different complexion on the proposal of the Prime Minister. The right hon. Gentleman had taken £1,200,000 for this purpose, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had another £4,000,000 which he was entitled to take from the Debt charge, making in all £5,200,000. When they considered that, together with the automatic increase from taxation which had always since he had been in the House amounted to £2,000,000, it must be that the Prime Minister had left his successor ample means to meet that charge. They were told by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite that they came into power on economy and reduction of expenditure, and since the present Government had been in office they had increased the expenditure. Let them look at the two figures presented to the House by the Prime Minister with regard to the expenditure of this year and last. The increase was mainly due to two heads. One was the Post Office services and the other was the Navy. With regard to the Post Office services, as everybody knew, the increase under that head was not by any means wholly due to an increase in the net expenditure of the year. During the time he had been in the House the expenditure of the Post Office had increased, but the net receipts had increased also. The other item, the Navy, was surely hardly one on which the Opposition would challenge the Government. If there was one thing on which they had insisted more than any other during the course of this session, it was that in their view the Government had entirely starved the Navy. They had pointed out again and again that not only was the existing increase necessary, but that a much larger increase would be necessary in future. That expenditure, as the House knew, was not due to the policy of the Government. We were conscious of the fact that our rivals had increased their Naval Estimates, and with the concurrence of the whole House the Government had affirmed the principle of maintaining a certain standard of power. We did not wish to embark upon a race in armaments, but at the same time it was, he thought, the view of the majority of the Members that we must indicate our intention of maintaining our position. Therefore, the accusation that they had failed to economise on the services of the Crown was, in this year at any rate, reduced to the two cases of the Post Office and the Navy. The Post Office was largely a matter of investment and business, and in the case of the Navy, if there was any increase, it was with the concurrence of the whole House, and with the advice and at the prompting of hon. Gentlemen opposite. Under those circumstances those two charges levied against the Budget and the Prime Minister by the Opposition had failed. They had not increased the normal expenditure except in the particulars he had mentioned, and they had not laid themselves open to commitments for which due provision had not been made. The Prime Minister had thoroughly considered the whole position. He had produced a Budget which made provision for the aged poor, and he had reduced the taxation of the country on tea and sugar, and, above all, had abolished the coal tax. Long after these debates had ceased to ring in their ears, the Prime Minister would go down to posterity as the most successful, able, and skilful of financiers.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) said he had much pleasure in congratulating the right hon. Gentleman on having at last found a supporter on his own side of the House. He was not at all sure, however, that the right hon. Gentleman had added to the efficacy of the Budget. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that Germany was in a worse position than this country, because Germany was borrowing money. She was borrowing money to build ships, and, he believed, for railways. The right hon. Gentleman must remember, however, that we would like to borrow, but had not been able. We had lent £5,000,000 to the Transvaal, but we had not been able to get the money. We had been obliged to borrow from the Departments short money because we could not issue a loan. The right hon. Gentleman shook his head, but it was a fact. Why had not we borrowed money for the Irish Land Act? If the Government could borrow money in order to complete the purchase of Irish land they would do so. They could not do it. The fact was that Germany could borrow money, and we could not. The argument of the right hon. Gentleman on the financial situation, therefore, fell to the ground. He wished to say a few words on the question of the reduction of Debt. Hon. Members did not seem to be aware that there were two ways of reducing the Debt. One was by the new and the other by the old Sinking Fund. The new Sinking Fund was placed at £28,000,000 by the last Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a great deal of the reduction of Debt had been owing to that. The remaining reduction of Debt effected was owing to the old Sinking Fund. It was not to the credit of the right hon. Gentleman or his predecessor. He was bound by Statute to devote the surplus under the old Sinking Fund to the reduction of the Debt; but he had occasionally made incursions upon the Sinking Fund. The only contribution the Party opposite had made to the reduction of Debt was £1,500,000 added to the new Sinking Fund last year. The right hon. Gentleman knew as well as he did that that was the case. The Chancellor of the Exchequer passed by without a single word in defence of the attitude he was going to take up on their criticisms on the reduction of the Sinking Fund next year. He would point out to the Committee the difference in the situation between now and in 1899. The deadweight Debt in 1899 was £625,000,000; it was now £696,000,000. Consols, in 1899, stood at 111, and money could be borrowed at 2¼ per cent. They now stood at 86, and they could not borrow except by paying 3 per cent. He had had a good deal of experience in the City, and he knew that it used to be said that the proud position in which England stood in reference to her great capacity for providing funds for war was due to the fact that she was in a better position to borrow money than other countries. It was said that although Germany had a great war chest with the money in it this country was in a much better position because we could borrow money more easily. He wished to point out, however, that whereas in the year 1899 we were able to borrow money at 2½ per cent. we could not borrow now at less than 3 per ent. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had to deal with the present state of things no matter which Government was responsible for them, and he had therefore to meet all present liabilities. In addition to the fact that the deadweight Debt was £170,000,000 more than it was ten years ago, no less than £100,000,000 had to be borrowed for the purchase of Irish land. The Sinking Fund had disappeared because they could not now borrow money at the rate which was contemplated when the Bill for the purchase of Irish land was passed. [Cries of "Divide, divide."] Ten years ago the income-tax was 8d. in the £ and now it was 1s. It should not be overlooked that the income-tax was supposed to be a kind of reserve upon which to draw in any sudden emergency, but they had now parted with that reserve altogether, and in spite of that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would find great difficulty next year in making both ends meet. He had pointed out the fallacies of the financial aspect of the Budget of the right hon. Gentleman.

In all his financial experience he had never before heard of any sound financier who contemplated the expenditure of over £6,000,000 upon a certain object and only made provision for £1,200,000 to meet it. The proper course for the right hon. Gentleman to have pursued was to have made old-age pensions to begin at once or else have waited until next year and then he could have started the whole scheme upon a sound financial basis. To provide this year only such a small sum towards this great scheme was a financial error. They did not really know where they were going to under this scheme. The cost of old-age pensions might easily become not £6,000,000 or £7,000,000, but even £14,000,000 or £15,000,000, in future years. He was absolutely against old-age pensions, for he did not believe that the country would be able to find the money, and he thought also that they would be demoralising. The only way to provide old-age pensions without demoralising would be upon a contributory basis. To rush wildly into a matter of this kind in the way proposed was foolish finance, and he was sorry that the right hon. Gentleman had not taken a more serious view of the question in his first speech as Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had avoided all the difficult points and made a light and amusing speech which did not, however, touch the real question at issue.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) said the Prime Minister had told them that if Germany continued her present naval policy she would have thirteen battleships of the "Dreadnought" type, and we should have only twelve. Consequently we should have to spend next year £5,000,000 or £6,000,000 extra on the Navy. Where was all that extra money to be found? Hon. Gentlemen opposite took the view that there was no chance of war so long as they remained sufficiently peaceful. Past history, however, taught them that the reverse was the case. He happened to know a certain number of German naval officers. [AN HON. MEMBER: How many?] He asked them last autumn against whom they were building all those ships, and they replied, "What do you think?" What did hon. Members suppose these German officers said? They replied that they were building this great navy to attack Great Britain in order to take our Colonies and our commerce. [Cries of "Oh, oh."] That at any rate was what the German naval officers said. [Cries of "Name."] Why should they have said it if it was not true? In regard to their naval policy the Government were now living in a fool's paradise, and when an emergency arose it would be too late. The Minister for Agriculture had informed them that the Government could not put a duty on foreign corn, because it was the food of the people. He wished to point out that sugar, tea, coffee and cocoa were also used as the food of the people, but they still put duties on those articles. The Governmen would not put a duty on hops, because it would help the British agriculturists and British labour, and that was what they called a free trade system. That was the system of taxation which it was claimed would benefit the workers of the country. He could easily show the absurdity of the principle upon which they levied taxes at the present time. A short time ago a farmer pointed out to the Prime Minister how heavily he was being taxed upon all he produced, and how the foreigner was not taxed at all. [Cries of "Shame."] The Prime Minister did not attempt to deny that. That farmer pointed out to the Prime Minister that in a good year he had to pay taxes to the extent of £15 out of every £100 worth of produce on his farm, whereas the foreigner was allowed to send his stuff over here and did not pay a single halfpenny towards the expenses of the country. The British people would not stand a system of that kind much longer. Until they gave British agriculturists fair play it was impossible for agriculture in this country to prosper and they would never be able to get the people back to the land. He knew the argument of the free traders. They said "Oh yes! the foreigner pays taxes in his own country." [Cries of "No."] He believed he was correct in that statement. The foreigner paid taxes for the upkeep of his own country, but he did not pay one farthing towards ours. Was it not a fact that protectionist countries had far more free trade than this country? [Laughter.] Hon. Gentlemen laughed. Germany did not pay a halfpenny towards the upkeep of our country, and yet she had access to our markets absolutely free. We had to pay for the upkeep of our own country in Imperial and local taxation between £250,000,000 and £300,000,000 a year. If we wanted to send anything to Germany we had to pay tariffs at German ports. Did not that mean that we were paying for German government very heavily? The Prime Minister, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, replying to a letter from a correspondent, said—

> "I am desired by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that he fully recognises that the national and local taxation of a country in which commodities are produced is an important element in the cost of production. This taxation can, however, operate to the disadvantage of a particular country only if its own taxation is excessive or inequitable as compared with that of other countries. It appears, therefore, to Mr. Asquith that the efforts of reformers should be directed to lessening the burden and adjusting the incidence of national and municipal taxation in this country, rather than seeking to impose on imported articles additional taxation which would be borne in the main not by the foreign producer, but by the home consumer, and, so increase the burden on British industry which it is intended to alleviate."

He wished to know what the right hon. Gentleman meant by the additional taxation which would be borne in the main by the home consumer. The average taxation in this country was calculated to amount to about 12 per cent. on all we produced, whether it was agricultural produce or manufactured goods. That was what the industries of this country had to bear at a time when all the protected countries in the world had more free trade than we had. The Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day stated that the taxation per head in this country was 15s. 3d. In Germany it was only 9s. 3d. The German Minister of the Interior said recently that he would like to know who invented the fairy tale that Great Britain was a free trade country; he pointed out that the taxation of Great Britain, which was far more per head of the population than in Germany, was almost all levied on the necessaries of the poor. In Germany, to an enormous extent, taxation was levied on goods which in no way affected the poor. Therefore it was the fact that in this so-called free trade country we were far more heavily taxed than they were in protected Germany. Not only that, but we allowed to come in here from Germany, with the exception of alcohol and tobacco, which were the luxuries of the poor, the whole of the luxuries of the rich, without their paying one halfpenny. We let in all the competing manufactured goods, which would, if made at home, provide our people with an enormous amount of labour and wages. We let in all these things absolutely free, to swamp our markets, driving our manufactures abroad, and preventing our own people from getting regular work and earning regular wages. These were the facts, nobody could deny them. This free trade theory was a very old one, and surely working people must see that under the existing system they were buying foreign labour. They called for foreign goods, but they were really buying foreign labour, for all the fully manufactured goods were almost all foreign labour. Manufactured silks, smart dresses, and motor-cars, all come from abroad. The Home Secretary—he did not know if he was in his place now—appreciated this system. No doubt he, and his brothers, and his sisters, and his uncles, and his aunts—[An Hon. Member: They are not Members of this House.]—but they had got their money invested abroad in mills that paid a very high percentage. ["Order."] Surely, for working people, this system was all wrong. ["Divide, divide."] Surely they wanted to take a share in regulating the trade of this country. [Cries of "Divide, divide," and "Speak out."]

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask hon. Members to be quiet.

Mr. HUNT said that if there was any truth in the free trade theory that imports were paid for by exports, surely we could put a certain amount of duty on their [Cries of "Divide," and "Order"] highly manufactured imports, and so prevent them to a certain extent from coming into this country. That would help us with our manufactures, and would provide the people of this country with an enormous additional amount of work and wages. That was exactly what Germany was now doing to us. He could show how Germany provided her people with work and wages. During the ten years ending in 1905, Germany took from this country [Cries of "Divide," and "Order"] £63,000,000 more in gold than we took from her; and if they looked into the German Green-books, they would see that he was right. [Cries of "Divide."] He thanked the House very much indeed for listening to him, and he hoped that Members would look into this question very closely, and would not be tied down to a rotten, out-of-date system, disbelieved in and done away with by the rest of the civilised world.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 230; Noes, 31. (Division List No. 104.)

AYES

Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Black, Arthur W.
Bowerman, C. W.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett, C. H. (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Fuller, John Michael F.
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.)
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt. Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt. Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R. L (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner

Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Illingworth, Percy H.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lamont, Norman
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M‘Crae, George
M‘Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M‘Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Montgomery, H. G.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, Capt. Hn. A. C. (Kincard.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Dowd, John
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pirie, Duncan V.
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Reddy, M.
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, Charles H. (Lincoln)
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampt'n
Waring, Walter
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarth'n
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M‘Kinnon

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F
Balcarres, Lord
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Clive, Percy Archer
Courthope, G. Loyd
Dalrymple, Viscount
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gretton, John
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Kerry, Earl of
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M‘Arthur, Charles
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Morpeth, Viscount
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Hunt.

Resolution to be reported this day; Committee to sit again this day.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock on Monday evening, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty-three minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Tuesday, 26th May, 1908.

The Right Honourable Edmund Robertson having been created Baron Lochee of Gowrie in the county of Perth, was (in the usual manner) introduced.

THE LATE RIGHT HONOURABLE SIR HENRY CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, G.C.B.

The King's Answer to the Address of Monday, the 18th instant, reported by the Lord Steward (*E. Beauchamp*) as follows:—

"I have received your Address praying that I will give directions that a monument be erected in the Collegiate Church of St. Peter, Westminster, to the memory of the late Right Honourable Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, with an inscription expressive of the high sense entertained by the House of Lords of the eminent services rendered by him to the country in Parliament, and in great Offices of State. I shall give directions in accordance with your Address."

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The Lord Chancellor acquainted the House that the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificate from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: North-East London Railway.

Also the Certificate that the Standing Orders applicable to the following Bill have been complied with: Post Office Sites [H.L.].

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Draycott Gas Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction Railway, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction Railway, and East and West Junction Railway (Amalgamation) Bill [H.L.]; Bristol Tramways Bill [H.L.]; Upton Town Hall Bill [H.L.]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [H.L.]; Cambrian Railways Bill [H.L.]; Rochester Bridge Bill [H.L.].—Read 3^a, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill.—Read 3^a, with the Amendments; and passed and returned to the Commons.

Wolverhampton Corporation Bill; Doncaster Corporation Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^a, and referred to the Examiners.

Argentine North Eastern Railway Bill [H.L.]; Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments: The said Amendments considered and agreed to.

Rochdale Corporation Bill.—Returned from the Commons with the Amendments agreed to.

Hurly's Divorce Bill [H.L.].—Message from the Commons for Copy of the Minutes of Evidence taken before this House, together with the proceedings, and the documents deposited in the case. Ordered to be communicated, with the request that they may be returned.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Brought from the Commons, read 1^a; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners. (No. 79.)

Edinburgh Corporation (Tramways, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3^a (according to order), and passed.

NEW BILL.

Assizes and Quarter Sessions Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to dispense with the attendance of Jurors at Assizes and Quarter Sessions, and with the holding of Assizes and Quarter Sessions in certain cases, was presented by the Lord Alverstone; read 1^a, to be printed; and to be read 2^a to-morrow. (No. 80.)

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AFRICA No. 2. (1908).

Further correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo (in

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

continuation of "Africa, No. 1. (1908)"); presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

IMPORTATION OF PLUMAGE PROHIBITION BILL [H.L.].

The evidence taken before the Select Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered out, except to members of the Committee and such other persons as the Committee shall think fit, until further order. (No. 78.)

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL [H.L.].

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, I have a somewhat lengthy list of Amendments to this Bill, but they are purely verbal. If it is desired that they should be taken *seriatim* I will adopt that course. As, however, they are purely verbal, it may be convenient that I should move them all together. Should any noble Lord desire information regarding them I should be very glad to give it; but if it is the pleasure of the House, I will move the Amendments *en bloc* when we get into Committee.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into the said Committee."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

***THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (The Earl of ONSLOW):** My Lords, before the House goes into Committee on this Bill I should like to express to the noble Earl my gratitude for his having courteously considered a number of suggestions that were put before him by the Central Land Association, of which I am chairman. We pointed out a number of matters in which we thought the Bill did not quite reproduce the existing law in the state in which it now is, and the noble Earl was good enough, in accordance with the promise he gave to your Lordships when the Bill was read a second time, to do his utmost—and I think he has completely satisfied us—to carry out that condition. There is only one matter to which I would wish to draw the attention of the noble Earl—namely, Clause 42 of the Bill. That clause deals with the application of the Market Gardeners Compensation Act. The law as it at present stands makes provision that the application of the Act should continue only until the first day on which either the landlord or the tenant of such tenancy should close and determine the tenancy. Under the Bill, as amended, it seems to me that the landlord might be liable for claims for market gardeners' improvements, not only as at present made before the termination of the tenancy by tenants under leases, but which might have been determined by a notice that would have expired on January 1st, 1896. I do not propose to move any Amendment at this stage, but I would ask the noble Earl to kindly look into that point, with the assistance of his legal advisers, and see whether the Bill as it stands does carry out exactly what is the existing state of the law. Subject to that I think your Lordships can very well adopt the Amendments standing in the name of the noble Earl.

EARL CARRINGTON: I need hardly say I shall be pleased to do as the noble Earl wishes, and I will refer to the matter again on Report.

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Verbal Amendments agreed to, and Bill reported with Amendments to the House; Standing Committee negatived.

Report of Amendments to be received to-morrow; and Bill to be printed as amended.

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS BILL [H.L.].

Order of the day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

EARL CARRINGTON: My Lords, I would ask the House to extend to me the same indulgence in regard to the Amendments standing in my name to this Bill, all of which are of a verbal character. They have been carefully looked into, and I think I can honestly guarantee that no new matter is introduced by them.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into the said Committee."—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Verbal Amendments agreed to, and Bill reported with Amendments to the House; Standing Committee negatived.

Report of Amendments to be received To-morrow, and Bill to be printed as amended.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.].

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

*LORD LOVAT: My Lords, in moving that the House resolve itself into Committee on this Bill I would ask your Lordships' permission to make a short statement upon the rather bulky list of Amendments standing in my name on the Paper. I think it will save the time of the House if I explain them now rather than as they are moved. Your Lordships will remember that before the Government Bill dealing with small holdings in Scotland came up, two Bills were introduced in your Lordships' House, one by Lord Camperdown, dealing with small holdings throughout Scotland, and one by myself, dealing with the Highland crofting area only. Owing to the uncertainty of the future of Lord Camperdown's Bill it would appear to be necessary to put some machinery into my Bill to deal with the question of new small holdings in the Highlands. I need not go into the question of the necessity of facilities being given for the further establishment of small holdings. The demand in certain parts of the Highlands for small holdings is well known. The Government Bill being now dead, there is a general feeling among those representing the Highland counties that an attempt should be made to secure for the crofting districts a portion of the money grant which the Government contemplated allocating for that purpose in their own Bill. In view of the possibility of that, the Amendments I now propose, in the first place, extend the jurisdiction of the Congested Districts Board to all crofting parishes. I need not point out the advantages which have accrued to congested areas through the efforts of the Congested Districts Board in the past. Although very much limited in funds they have been able to develop the fishery industry by securing increased access, and by the construction of roads, piers, and harbours, agriculture by means of imported stock, and education by means of experimental areas. It is proposed in the Amendments standing in my name besides extending their sphere of usefulness to give them additional powers to enable them to develop forestry and agricultural organisation and co-operation, and generally to increase the possibility of employment without which we think it is possible to place an increased number of people on the soil. If a money grant could be obtained, certain compulsory and voluntary clauses for the acquisition of land would be required, and they are included in my Amendments. The voluntary clauses give the Commissioners power to negotiate voluntarily with landlords in any crofting parish. They are based on the powers now possessed by the Congested Districts Board in dealing with the congested areas. The compulsory clauses for the acquisition of land for distribution to the crofting community are an adaptation of those in the English Act to the conditions prevailing in the Highlands. In the Highlands the central difficulty in the solution of the land question is undoubtedly the question of the rates. This is a matter of so much importance that it is essential that the body administering the rates should be chosen for administrative capability, and that county councils should not be returned solely on account of their attitude towards this question of land. This may not be a matter of importance in England, but in the Highlands, where the rates reach in cases 14s., and sometimes 20s., in the £ the question of administration may very easily be a most serious one. On this account it has been considered advisable to change the lessor from being the county council, as in the English Bill, to the Crofters Commission. The advantage of having the Crofters Commission as the lessor from the landlord is, in the first place, that a body of men are dealt with who have experience of land. In the next place, the settlement of the land would, under the Bill, be in the hands of the same body as was responsible for the expenditure of the additional grant of £35,000. I think for many reasons it is essential that the development and settlement should go hand in hand. Another advantage which will accrue from having a central body like the Crofters Commission to deal with this matter is that the situation will be viewed as a whole, land will be taken where congestion is most acute, and there will not be the danger of picking out the eyes of farms and discommoding a large number of tenants for the settlement of a few. The second change which is made in the English Act is that of substituting for the Board of Agriculture the Secretary for Scotland. As to the other Amendments, they do not affect the principle of the Bill; they are adaptations from the English Act to meet local circumstances and the various objections raised by the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack in the earlier discussion. I do not know if the Bill as amended has any chance of being seriously considered by His Majesty's Government, but I would submit that on general lines it has two things in its favour. In the first place, it would appear on many points to meet the views expressed by the representatives of crofting counties in another place. In the second place, it meets in its amended form four of the main objections that the Lord Chancellor raised at the Second Reading debate. At that time the Lord Chancellor stated that the Bill contained no compulsory powers for the creation of new holdings. This even at the time was hardly a fair criticism, because it was clearly shown both by Lord Camperdown and myself that the two Peers' Bills on Scottish land were mutually dependent, and that the compulsory powers given by Lord Camperdown's Bill to the whole of Scotland applied also to the Highlands. By the present amendments even this criticism is removed. The second point that the Lord Chancellor brought out was the absence of powers for extension of holdings. These it will be seen are dealt with in Clause 8 and following clauses. The third criticism was on the subject of the confusion of judicial functions and administrative duties by amalgamating the Crofter Commission and the Congested Districts Board. I would here point out that the Crofter Commission's judicial functions are by the Bill taken over by the Secretary for Scotland and the independent valuator, and as regards their judicial duties on the fixing of "fair rent," these duties have already practically lapsed. On the fourth point—the rating of crofters for houses for summer visitors—the subject has come up from the small holders themselves. It also forms a part of the Bill introduced by the crofter Members.

Moved, "That the House do now resolve itself into the said Committee."—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Motion agreed to.

House in Committee accordingly.

[The Earl of ONSLOW in the Chair.]

Amendment moved—

"Before Clause 1, page 1, line 4, after the word 'follows' to insert, 'Part I.—Amendments of the Crofters' Acts.'"—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 1:

Drafting Amendments agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 2 to 8 agreed to.

LORD LOVAT moved the insertion of a new clause, dealing with the acquisition and disposal of land for enlargement of crofters' holdings.

Amendment moved—

"After Clause 8, to insert the following new clause: '(1) If the Crofters' Commission are unable to acquire by agreement, or by virtue of the provisions of the Act of 1886 relative to the enlargement of holdings, suitable land for the purpose of enlargement of crofters' holdings, they may acquire land compulsorily in accordance with the provisions of this Act relating to compulsory acquisition of land, subject always to the restrictions and limitations contained in subsections (1) and (5) of Section 13 of the Act of 1886; (2) where the Crofters' Commission propose to acquire land compulsorily for the purpose aforesaid, they shall submit any such proposal to the Secretary for Scotland. The proposal shall be in the prescribed form, and shall be published and advertised, together with notice of the time within and the manner in which objections are to be sent to the Secretary for Scotland in such manner as the Secretary for Scotland thinks best adapted for informing the persons affected and for insuring publicity; (3) the Secretary for Scotland after considering the objections (if any) may confirm the proposal either without modification or subject to such modifications as the Secretary for Scotland thinks fit, or may disallow the proposal; (4) land acquired compulsorily by the Crofters' Commission under this Act for the enlargement of crofters' holdings shall be assigned by the Commission in accordance with the provisions of the Act of 1886 relative to the enlargement of holdings.' "—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 11 agreed to.

Lord LOVAT moved the insertion of a new clause after Clause 11.

Amendment moved—

" After Clause 11, to insert the following new clause: ' (1) In addition to the three members of the Crofters' Commission appointed in virtue of Section 17 of the Act of 1886, it shall be lawful for His Majesty to appoint as a commissioner a person skilled in forestry; (2) The Crofters' Commission shall take such steps as they think proper for the promotion and development of forestry and of agricultural organisation and co-operation in any crofting parish or parishes.' "—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

" Before Clause 12, page 5, to insert, ' Part II.—Amendments of Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897).' "—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 15 agreed to.

Amendment moved—

" After Clause 15, to insert the following new clauses, ' Part III.—Provision of New Holdings in Crofting Parishes. (1) With a view to facilitating the provision of new holdings for persons residing in any crofting parish, the Crofters' Commission shall ascertain the extent to which there is a demand for such holdings in any crofting parish or parishes, or would be a demand if suitable land were available, and the extent to which it is reasonably practicable, having regard to the provisions of this Act, to satisfy any such demand; (2) Where the Crofters' Commission are satisfied that there is a demand for new holdings and that suitable land exists, it shall be their duty to negotiate with the landlords of suitable land with a view to the constitution by agreement between such landlords and any persons as aforesaid of any one or more new holdings in respect of such land; (3) For the purpose of facilitating the constitution of new holdings as aforesaid, it shall be lawful for the Crofters' Commission to pay to the landlord or to any tenant of the land to be occupied by a new holder or new holders such compensation as may be agreed in respect of any loss or injury caused by the constitution of such holdings.

.—(1) It shall be lawful for the Crofters' Commission to negotiate with the landlord or landlords of suitable land with a view to the provision by agreement of new holdings in respect of such land; (2) The Crofters' Commission may, for the purpose of providing new holdings for persons residing in any crofting parish or parishes who desire to buy or to lease and will themselves cultivate the holdings, purchase land, within the area specified in Section 19 of the Act of 1886, by agreement, or take land on lease; (3) If the Crofters' Commission are unable to acquire by agreement and on reasonable terms suitable land for the purpose aforesaid, they may acquire land compulsorily in accordance with the provisions of this Act relating to compulsory acquisition of land.

.—(1) Where the Crofters' Commission propose to acquire land compulsorily for new holdings, the Crofters' Commission shall prepare one or more draft schemes for the provision of such holdings.

(2) A draft scheme under this section may specify: (*a*) The parish or parishes in which land is to be acquired for new holdings; (*b*) The approximate quantity of land to be acquired, and the number, nature, and size of the new holdings to be provided; (*c*) Whether and to what extent grazing or other similar rights, to be defined in the scheme, should be attached to the new holdings created in pursuance of the scheme, and, if so, the approximate quantity of land or extent and nature of the rights to be acquired for the purpose; (*d*) The time within which the scheme or any part thereof is to be carried into effect; and the scheme may contain such incidental, consequential, or supplemental provisions (including provisions as to the subsequent variation of the scheme) as may appear necessary or proper for the purposes of the scheme.

.—(1) A copy of any draft scheme under this Act shall be sent to the Secretary for Scotland, and the draft scheme and any modifications therein which the Secretary for Scotland may propose to make shall be published and advertised, together with notice of the time within and the manner in which objections are to be sent to the Secretary for Scotland, in such manner as the Secretary for Scotland thinks best adapted for informing the persons affected and for insuring publicity; (2) The Secretary for Scotland shall consider the draft scheme and any objections thereto duly made, and may (? shall) cause a public local inquiry to be held at which the Crofters' Commission, any person interested in the land proposed to be acquired, and such other persons as the person holding the inquiry may in his discretion think fit to allow, shall be permitted to appear and be heard; (3) The Secretary for Scotland, after considering the objections and the report of the person holding the inquiry (if any), may settle and confirm the scheme either without modification or subject to such modifications as the Secretary for Scotland thinks fit, or may annul the scheme.

.—(1) Where with a view to or as incidental to the provision of any new holding or holdings, whether by agreement or otherwise, the Crofters' Commission are of opinion that assistance should be provided for the purpose of dividing, fencing, or otherwise preparing or adapting the land, making occupation roads or executing other works, such as works for the provision of drainage or water supply, or erecting or adapting a dwelling-house or dwelling-houses or other buildings, or for any similar purpose, the Crofters' Commission may provide such assistance by way of loan, or (except as regards dwelling-houses or other buildings) by way of gift, and subject to such conditions as they think fit, which conditions and the provisions for their enforcement, or for the case of their violation shall be as effectual as if they were contained in this Act; (2) Land acquired by the Crofters' Commission for the purpose of new holdings may be adapted as hereinafter provided for sale or letting, and sold or let for new holdings on such terms and subject to such conditions as the Crofters' Commission shall determine.

.—(1) The Crofters' Commission shall cause to be prepared and duly registered all deeds, writs, and instruments necessary for completing the title to the land disposed of by them, and for securing the payment of any loan over land made by them, and shall include in the grant or loan the cost so incurred, or to be incurred in accordance with scales set forth in tables fixed by the Commission; (2) The Commission, if they think fit, may from time to time appoint, at their pleasure, a person duly qualified to carry out the provisions of this section, and shall assign to him such salary or remuneration as they may determine.

Part IV.—General.—Financial Provisions.—In addition to the Congested Districts (Scotland) Fund constituted in virtue of the Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897, there shall be placed at the disposal of the Crofters' Commission for the purposes hereinafter specified any sums not exceeding £35,000 annually voted by Parliament for the said purposes. The money placed at the disposal of the Crofters' Commission shall be applied: (*a*) For the purposes specified in the Congested Districts (Scotland) Act, 1897, as amended by this Act; and (*b*) for the purpose of facilitating the constitution of new holdings and of the enlargement of existing holdings, and of forestry and agricultural organisation and co-operation as hereinafter provided.

Acquisition of Land.—(1) Where the Crofters' Commission propose to purchase land compulsorily under this Act, the Crofters' Commission may, subject to the provisions of Part I. of the First Schedule to this Act, submit to the Secretary for Scotland an order putting in force as respects the land specified in the order the provisions of the Lands Clauses Acts with respect to the purchase and taking of land otherwise than by agreement; (2) Where the Crofters' Commission propose to hire land compulsorily, the Crofters' Commission may submit to the Secretary for Scotland an order for the compulsory hiring of the land specified in the order for a period not less than fourteen nor more than thirty-five years, and the provisions of Part I. of the First Schedule to this Act shall apply to the order in like manner as it applies to an order for compulsory purchase, with the substitution of "hiring" for "purchase," and with the modifications set out in Part II. of that schedule; (3) An order under this section shall be of no force unless and until it is confirmed by the Secretary for Scotland, who may, subject to the provisions of the First Schedule to this Act, confirm the order either without modification or subject to such modifications as he thinks fit, and an order when so confirmed shall become final and have effect as if enacted in this Act; and the confirmation by the Secretary for Scotland shall be conclusive evidence that the requirements of this Act have been complied with, and that the order has been duly made and is within the powers of this Act; (4) An order under this section may provide for the continuance of any existing servitude or the creation of the new servitude over the land authorised to be acquired, and every such order shall, if so required by the owner of the land to be acquired, provide for the creation of such new servitudes as are reasonably necessary to secure the continued use and enjoyment by such owner and his tenants of all means of access, drainage, water supply, and other similar conveniences theretofore used or enjoyed by them over the land to be acquired: Provided that, notwithstanding anything contained in this subsection, no new servitude created by or in pursuance of such order over land hired by the Commission shall continue beyond the determination of such hiring; (5) In determining the amount of any disputed compensation under any such order, no additional allowance shall be made on account of the purchase or hiring being compulsory; (6) Where land authorised to be compulsorily hired by an order under this section is subject to a heritable security, any lease made in pursuance of the order by the creditor in possession shall have the like effect as if it were a lease authorised by Section 6 of the Heritable Securities (Scotland) Act, 1894.

.—(1) Where the Commission has hired land compulsorily for new holdings, the Commission may, by giving to the landlord not more than two years nor less than one year before the expiration of the tenancy notice in writing, renew the tenancy for such term, not being less than fourteen nor more than thirty-five years, as may be specified in the notice, and at such rent as, in default of agreement, may be determined by valuation by a valuer appointed by the Secretary for Scotland, but otherwise on the same terms and conditions as the original lease, and so from time to time. Provided that if on any such notice being given the landlord shall prove to the satisfaction of the Secretary for Scotland that any land included in the tenancy is required for the amenity or convenience of any dwelling-house, then such land shall be excluded from the renewed tenancy. (2) In assessing the rent to be paid under this section the valuer shall not take into account any increase in the value of the holding: (*a*) Due to improvements in respect of which the Commission would have been entitled to compensation, if instead of renewing the tenancy the Commission had quitted the land on the determination of the tenancy; or (*b*) due to any use to which the land might otherwise be put during the renewed term, being a use in respect of which the landlord is entitled to resume possession of the land under this Act; or (*c*) due to the establishment by the Commission of other new holdings in the neighbourhood; or any depreciation in the value of the land in respect of which the landlord would have been entitled to compensation if the Commission had so quitted the land as aforesaid.

.—(1) Any person having power to lease land for agricultural purposes for a limited term, whether subject to any consent or conditions or not, may, subject to the like consent and conditions (if any), lease land to the Commission for the purposes of new holdings for a term not exceeding thirty-five years, either with or without such right of renewal as is conferred by this Act in the case of land hired compulsorily for those purposes; (2) The like powers of leasing may be exercised, in the case of land belonging to the Crown, by the Commissioners of Woods, with the consent of the Treasury.

.—(1) No land shall be authorised by an order under this Act to be acquired compulsorily which at the date of the order is: (*a*) Land being garden ground only, appurtenant to a house; or (*b*) land within any burgh boundary; or (*c*) land being or forming part of any market garden; or (*d*) land being or forming part of any glebe, or any small holding under the Small Holdings Act, 1892, or any allotment under the Allotments Acts; or (*e*) land that is not either wholly agricultural or wholly pastoral or in part agricultural and as to the residue pastoral; or (*f*) land being woodland, or being or forming part of the home farm of any estate, or of any policy or park, or of any pleasure ground or other land required for the amenity, or convenience of any residence or farmsteading; or being permanent grass park held for the purposes of a business or calling not primarily agricultural or pastoral, including that of butcher, cattle-dealer, and the like, or being land used for drying or repairing fishing nets or (*g*) land held and used by a local authority for purposes of public recreation; or (*h*) land acquired whether compulsorily or by agreement for any undertaking of a public nature, under the authority of any Act of Parliament or any order having the force of an Act of Parliament; or (*i*) the site of an ancient monument or other object of archæological interest. (2) The Commission in making, and the Secretary for Scotland in confirming, an order for the compulsory acquisition of land, shall avoid taking land unless there is a reasonable prospect of increasing the number of persons beneficially employed on the land and of maintaining the prosperity of the inhabitants generally of the district in which such land is situated, and shall have regard to the extent of land held or occupied in the locality by any owner or tenant, and to the convenience of other property belonging to or occupied by the same owner or tenant, and shall, so far as practicable, avoid taking an undue or inconvenient quantity of land from any one owner or tenant, and for that purpose, where part only of a holding is taken, shall take into consideration the size and character of the existing agricultural buildings not proposed to be taken which were used in connection with the holding and the quantity and nature of the land available for occupation therewith, and shall also, so far as practicable, avoid displacing any considerable number of persons employed on or about the land. (3) No land shall be authorised by an order under this Act to be acquired compulsorily for the purposes of new holdings which is or forms part of: (*a*) a farm, the annual rent of which does not exceed one hundred pounds in money, occupied by a person who has no interest in any other farm; or (*b*) a farm occupied subject to a lease which was in force at Whitsunday nineteen hundred and eight, so long as the lease remains in force.

.—(1) The powers of the Commission to acquire land for new holdings shall, subject to the restrictions by this Act imposed, include power to acquire land for the purpose of attaching to new holdings provided by the Commission rights of grazing and other similar rights over the land so required. (2) Any rights created or acquired by the Commission under this section shall be attached to the new holdings in such manner and subject to such regulations as the Commission think expedient.

.—Where land has been hired by the Commission compulsorily under this Act, and the land or any part thereof at any time during the tenancy thereof by the Commission is shown to the satisfaction of the Secretary for Scotland to be required by the landlord to be used for building, planting, mining, or other industrial purposes, or for roads necessary therefor, it shall be lawful for the landlord to resume possession of the land or part thereof upon giving to the Commission twelve months' previous notice in writing of his intention so to do; and, if a part only of the land is resumed the rent payable by the Commission shall as from the date of resumption be reduced by such sum as in default of agreement may be determined by valuation by a valuer appointed by the Secretary for Scotland.

.—(1) Where the Commission has let a new holding to any tenant, the tenant shall as against the Commission have the same rights with respect to compensation for the improvements mentioned in Paragraph (27) (i.) (ii.) (iii.) and (iv.) of the First Schedule to the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1900, as if it had been agreed in writing that the holding should be let as a market garden. Provided that the tenant shall not be entitled to compensation in respect of any such improvement if executed contrary to an express prohibition in writing by the Commission affecting either the whole or any part of the holding or allotment; but, if the tenant feels aggrieved by any such prohibition, he may appeal to the Secretary for Scotland, who may confirm, vary, or annul the prohibition, and the decision of the Secretary for Scotland shall be final. (2) Where land has been hired by the Commission for new holdings, the Commission shall (subject in the case of land hired by agreement to any agreement to the contrary) be entitled at the determination of the tenancy on quitting the land to compensation under the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Acts, 1883 to 1906, for any improvement mentioned in Paragraph (27) (i.) (ii.) (iii.) and (iv.) of the First Schedule to the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1900, and for any improvement mentioned in Part I. or Part II. of that schedule which was necessary or proper to adapt the land for new holdings, as if such improvements as aforesaid were improvements mentioned in Part III. of that schedule. Provided that, in the case of land hired compulsorily, the amount of the compensation payable to the Commission for those improvements shall be such sum as fairly represents the increase (if any) in the value to the landlord and his successors in title of the holding to those improvements.

Supplemental.—(1) It shall be lawful for the Secretary for Scotland, whenever necessary, to appoint a person to hold an inquiry in pursuance of this Act. The person so appointed shall have for the purpose aforesaid the same powers as the Local Government Board for Scotland and their inspectors respectively have for the purpose of an inquiry under the Public Health (Scotland) Act, 1897. (2) Notices of the inquiries shall be given and published in accordance with such general or special directions as the Secretary for Scotland may give.

.—(1) All questions which under this Act are referred to arbitration shall, unless otherwise expressly provided by this Act, be determined by a single arbiter in accordance with the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883 to 1906. (2) The remuneration of an arbiter or valuer appointed under this Act shall be fixed by the Secretary for Scotland.

.—The 'Secretary for Scotland shall make an annual report to Parliament of his proceedings under this Act.' "—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16:

Amendment moved—

"In page 6, line 9, to leave out the words 'In this Act' and to insert, '(1) For the purposes of this Act the expression 'new holding' means an agricultural holding the annual rent of which does not exceed thirty pounds in money. (2) For the purposes of this Act: The expression 'prescribed' means prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary for Scotland; the expression "landlord" in relation to any land compulsorily hired by the Crofter's Commission means the person for the time being entitled to receive the rent of the land from the Crofters' Commission.' "—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 6, line 19, after '1891,' to insert the following new subsection, '(3) Any Notice required by this Act to be served or given, may be sent by registered post.' "—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 16, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 17:

Amendment moved—

"To leave out Clause 17."—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 18:

Amendment moved—

"To leave out Clause 18."—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Clause 19:

Amendment moved—

"To leave out Clause 19."—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 6 to insert the following,—'(1) This Act may be cited as the Crofting Parishes Act, 1908, and, so far as it relates to crofters' holdings, shall be construed with the Crofters' Acts, and may be cited with those Acts as the Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Acts, 1886 to 1908; (2) this Act shall commence on 1st January, 1909; (3) this Act shall extend to Scotland only; (4) the enactments mentioned in the Second Schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent specified in the third column of that schedule.' "—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

"In page 7, line 1, to leave out the word 'Schedule' and to insert the following, 'Schedules.—First Schedule.—Part I.—Provisions as to the Compulsory Acquisition of Land by the Crofters' Commission.—(1) The order shall be in the prescribed form, and shall contain such provisions as the Secretary for Scotland may prescribe for the purpose of carrying the order into effect, and of protecting the Commission and the persons interested in the land, and shall incorporate, subject to the necessary adaptations, the Lands Clauses Acts and Section 6 and Sections 70 and 78 of the Railways Clauses Consolidation (Scotland) Act, 1845, but subject to this modification, that any question of disputed compensation shall be determined by a single arbiter appointed by the Secretary for Scotland, who shall be deemed to be an arbiter within the meaning of the Lands Clauses Acts, and the provisions of those Acts with respect to arbitration shall, subject to the provisions of this schedule, apply accordingly; (2) the order shall be published by the Commission in the prescribed manner, and such notice shall be given both in the locality in which the land is proposed to be acquired and to the owners, lessees, and occupiers of that land as may be prescribed; (3) if within the prescribed period no objection to the order has been presented to the Secretary for Scotland by a person interested in the land, or if every such objection has been withdrawn, the Secretary for Scotland shall, without further inquiry, confirm the order, but if such an objection has been presented and has not been withdrawn the Secretary for Scotland shall forthwith cause a public inquiry to be held in the locality in which the land is proposed to be acquired, and the Commission and all persons interested in the land and such other persons as the person holding the inquiry in his discretion thinks fit to allow shall be permitted to appear and be heard at the inquiry; (4) Before confirming the order the Secretary for Scotland shall consider the report of the person who held the inquiry, and all objections made thereat; (5) the arbiter shall, so far as practicable, in assessing compensation act on his own knowledge and experience, but, subject as aforesaid, at any inquiry or arbitration held under this schedule the person holding the inquiry or arbitration shall hear, by themselves or their agents, any authorities or parties authorised by or under this Act to appear, and shall hear witnesses, but shall not, except in such cases as the Secretary for Scotland otherwise direct, hear counsel or professional expert witnesses; (6) the Secretary for Scotland may, with the concurrence of the Lord President of the Court of Session, make rules fixing a scale of costs to be applicable on an arbitration under this schedule, and an arbiter under this schedule may, notwithstanding anything in the Lands Clauses Acts, determine the amount of costs, and shall have power to disallow as costs in the arbitration the costs of any witness whom he considers to have been called unnecessarily, and any other costs which he considers to have been caused or incurred unnecessarily; (7) in construing, for the purposes of this schedule or any order made thereunder, and enactment incorporated with the order, this Act, together with the order, shall be deemed to be the special Act, and the Commission shall be deemed to be the promoters of the undertaking.

Part II.—Provisions as to the Compulsory Hiring of Land by the Crofters' Commission.—(1) The Secretary for Scotland shall make regulations for the purpose of carrying the order into effect and of protecting the Commission and the persons interested in the land and the order shall incorporate such regulations, together with such provisions of the Lands Clauses Acts and of Section 6 and of Sections 70 to 78 of the Railways Clauses Consolidation (Scotland) Act, 1845, as may, subject to the prescribed adaptations, appear to the Secretary for Scotland necessary or expedient for that purpose. (2) The order authorising the land to be hired compulsorily shall determine the terms and conditions of the hiring other than the rent, and in particular: (*a*) Shall provide for the insertion in the lease of agreements by the Commission to cultivate the land in a proper manner and to pay to the landlord at the determination of the tenancy, on the Commission quitting the land, compensation for any depreciation of the land by reason of any failure by the Commission or any person deriving title under them, to observe such agreements or by reason of any user of the land by the Commission or such person as aforesaid, and (unless otherwise agreed) to keep the buildings and premises leased in repair; and (*b*) shall not authorise the breaking up of pasture unless the Secretary for Scotland is satisfied that it can be so broken up without depreciating the value of the land, or that the circumstances are such that small holdings cannot otherwise be successfully cultivated; and (*c*) shall not except with the consent of the landlord confer on the Commission any right to fell or cut timber or trees or any right to take, sell, or carry away any minerals, gravel, sand, or clay, except so far as may be necessary or convenient for the purpose of erecting buildings on the land or otherwise adapting the land for small holdings or allotments, and except upon payment of compensation for minerals, gravel, sand, or clay so used. (3) The determination of: (*a*) The amount of the rent to be paid by the Commission for the land compulsorily hired; (*b*) The amount of any other compensation to be paid by the Commission to any person entitled thereto in respect of the land or any interest therein, or in respect of improvements executed on the land or otherwise; and (*c*) Where part only of a holding held for an unexpired term is hired, the deduction to be made from the rent paid for the holding during the remainder of that term; shall in default of agreement be by valuation by a single valuer appointed by the Secretary for Scotland: Provided that if the land hired is in the occupation of a tenant he may by notice in writing served on the Commission before the determination of his tenancy require that any claim by him against the Commission which, under the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Acts, 1883 to 1906, might be referred to arbitration under those Acts shall be so referred, and in such case those claims shall be determined by arbitration under those Acts and not by valuation under this Act. (4) The valuer, in fixing the rent to be paid for the land compulsorily hired, shall take into consideration the rent (if any) at which the subjects have been let and the annual value at which the subjects are entered in the Valuation Roll, the profits derived from the existing use and occupation of the subjects, the loss (if any) caused to the owner by severance, the terms and conditions of the hiring, and all the other circumstances connected with the land, but shall not make any allowance in respect of any use to which the land compulsorily hired might otherwise be put by the owner during the term of hiring, being a use in respect of which the owner is entitled to resume possession of the land under this Act. (5) Any compensation awarded to a tenant in respect of any depreciation of the value to him of the residue of his holding caused by the withdrawal from the holding of the land compulsorily hired shall, as far as possible, be provided for by taking such compensation into account in fixing the deduction to be made from the rent paid for the holding during the remainder of the term for which it is held by the tenant. (6) Any person interested in any valuation shall give the valuer all such assistance, information, and explanations as he may require, and shall produce to the valuer, or give him access to, all such books, accounts, vouchers, and other documents relating to the land to be compulsorily hired as he may reasonably require for the purposes of valuation, and such expenses as the valuer certifies to have been properly incurred by any person in furnishing such assistance, information, and explanations, or otherwise in relation to the valuation, shall be paid by the Commission. (7) On the determination of any tenancy created by compulsory hiring any questions as to the amount due by the Commission for depreciation, shall in default of agreement be determined by arbitration.' "—(*Lord Lovat.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Consequential Amendment agreed to.

Title amended, and Bill reported, with Amendments, to the House.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee, and to be printed as amended.

REGISTRATION BILL [H.L.].

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

House in Committee (according to order): Bills reported without Amendment; Standing Committees negatived; and Bills to be read 3ª To-morrow.

INFANTRY OFFICERS' CHARGERS.

LORD ROSMEAD: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War whether His Majesty's Government will take into consideration the advisability of amending the present regulations with regard to forage as they apply to mounted officers of Infantry, so that an Infantry mounted officer may be enabled to draw forage for a horse his own property, provided such horse comes within the qualifications of an Infantry officer's charger, instead of procuring or hiring a horse from the Government Remount Establishment, as is the case at present. I do not wish to detract from the advantage it has been to mounted officers of all branches of the service to obtain horses from the Remount Establishment, such horses being used for general purposes on payment of so much per annum; but I ask His Majesty's Government to go one step further and allow mounted officers who have horses of their own to draw forage for those horses instead of having to procure or hire horses, as at present, from the Remount Establishment. A mounted officer in an Infantry Battalion may be in possession of a horse which is easy to get on and off, quiet under fire, and in every way qualified as a charger. Yet, according to the regulations, this officer is not allowed to draw forage for his horse, but has to obtain one from the Remount Establishment. I also understand that the horses provided by the Remount Establishment do not always give satisfaction. In the first place, a horse may not be up to the weight of the officer for whom it is provided; in the second place, the horses are not always fully broken in. This is a very small matter, and one which would involve little, if any, expense to the public. I therefore trust that I shall receive a satisfactory answer from the Under-Secretary.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord LUCAS): My Lords, there is a Committee now sitting discussing questions concerning the supply of infantry officers' charges, and the particular point which the noble Lord has brought forward is at this moment before the Committee.

THE TERRITORIAL FORCES.

THE EARL OF ALBEMARLE: My Lords, I rise to call the attention of the

Under-Secretary for War to: (1) The inadequacy of the provision for travelling allowance in respect of officers of the Territorial Forces, and of the remuneration of medical officers for examining soldiers for physical fitness; (2) the advisability of making arrangements for a full and complete signalling plant for each unit; and (3) the impossibility of providing in future local or detachment bands which will affect recruiting in the Territorial Army. I do not claim that these are matters of very great public interest, but still they affect individuals and units in the Territorial Army, and therefore it is in the public interest that these matters should be brought before your Lordships. I hope I may get some satisfactory statement on each of these questions from Lord Lucas, to whom I have already privately written. The first question deals with the travelling allowance of officers of the Territorial Force to and from camp. According to the present regulation it would appear as though these officers are to travel third-class; but that would be contrary to the rule that all officers are to travel first-class. The next question is that of the remuneration of medical officers for examining soldiers as to their physical fitness to serve. At present medical officers are only allowed 1s. a head for examining recruits, and they feel it is somewhat an indignity to them, because they would far sooner examine the recruits for nothing than give their time for 1s. If His Majesty's Government could see their way to make the performance of this duty more palatable it would be a good thing in the interests of the Service. The next point has reference to the question of signalling plant. I am sure everyone wishes to make the Territorial Army a success, but no unit, I imagine, can be considered complete without signalling plant. I know that this runs into money. I believe a proper plant would cost some £200 or £300; the grant is not big enough at present to enable the County Associations to provide all their units with complete signalling plants, and I am sure your Lordships will consider that a unit is not complete if it does not possess everything required for an emergency. My last point may raise a smile—it is that of local or detachment bands. All Infantry units in the past have had local bands. I admit that perhaps the music produced has not always been what your Lordships would enjoy, but these bands do affect recruiting. Volunteers have been accustomed to a band, and from long experience I know that a band is far better than a recruiting sergeant. I apologise for taking up the time of the House on these apparently small matters, but they constantly crop up before the Territorial Associations and considerably add to the difficulties.

LORD LUCAS: My Lords, with regard to the question of travelling allowance, a penny a mile is the all-round rate paid to the County Associations, but officers are entitled to travel first-class. When the County Associations are sending considerable bodies of men to camp they will get cheap excursion rates, and the saving thus made will enable the Associations to pay first-class fares for the officers. The allowance has been worked out on what has been paid by Volunteer regiments in the past. As to the payment of doctors for examining recruits, in the past many medical officers have shown great public spirit in this matter and examined recruits free. We are greatly indebted to them for it, and it is hoped that many of them will continue to do so. I think we may fairly reckon on a certain number of units getting their recruits passed free as in the past, but where a recruit has to go to a doctor who does not belong to the Territorial Force, the charge will probably be more than the 1s. The usual fee is, I believe, 2s. 6d. and the saving made in respect of recruits examined free will enable this to be paid.

THE EARL OF ALBEMARLE: I would point out that to examine a recruit properly takes at least a quarter of an hour. I knew of a case where 150 recruits were examined at the rate of three minutes a head. That is not doing the work properly. Efficient examination takes from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour per man, and I think it is hardly fair to expect a surgeon to give up so much of his time for nothing.

LORD LUCAS: The next Question put to me had reference to signalling plant. The increase of the administration grant under the new financial arrangement ought to provide money enough to go a considerable way towards maintaining these signalling plants. It is, however under consideration at the present time as to whether an initial issue of signalling plant should be made to battalions to start them off where they have not got the full amount of signalling plant. But the ordinary annual grants to the Associations should be quite sufficient to maintain the signalling plants of units which already have them. The question of bands was considered when the administration grant was calculated, and a certain amount was allowed for bands. The administration grant is paid over to the County Associations, and it is for them to decide in each case how much of that money they will spend upon bands. If they consider that detachment bands are good things to have they will be able to spend their money upon them. So long as the expenditure of an Association does not exceed the total grant the financial authorities at the War Office will raise no objection. It is a matter which must rest with the County Association, which, in the opinion of the Army Council, is the best authority to decide as to how far detachment bands and things of that sort are a necessity.

BUCKIE BURGH AND BUCKIE (CLUNY) HARBOUR ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Buckie Burgh and Buckie (Cluny) Harbour—Was presented by the Lord Herschell; (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Sections 8 and 9); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 84.)

House adjourned at twenty minutes past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Four o'clock.

The Earl of Albemarle.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 26th May, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [Lords],—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Doncaster Corporation Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Divorce Bills.—Ordered, That the Lord-Advocate be discharged from the Select Committee on Divorce Bills.

Ordered, That Mr. Solicitor-General for Ireland be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Whiteley.*)

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill; Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill; Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

Dublin and Central Ireland Electric Power (re-committed) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to:—Knott End Railway Bill; Dartford Gas Bill; Great Eastern Railway (General Powers) Bill; Dundalk Urban District Council Bill, without Amendment; Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the undertakers of the Aire and Calder Navigation to construct works and acquire lands in connection with their undertaking; to amend the Acts relating to the undertakers; to confer further powers upon them; and for other purposes." Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords.]

Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—That they communicate Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings taken upon the Second Reading of Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords], together with the documents deposited in the case, as desired by this House, and they request that the same may be returned.

Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords]—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

Standing Orders,—Resolutions reported from the Select Committee:—

1. "That, in the case of the Holderness Water Bill, Petition for Additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought not to be dispensed with."

2. "That, in the case of the Honourable Artillery Company [Lords], Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with:—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

Second Resolution agreed to.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Woodberry Down, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Granville, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

HOUSING, TOWN PLANNING, ETC., BILL.

Petition from Chelsea, for Amendment; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Sharpness; Walsall; and West Bromwich; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from South Tottenham, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Abergele; Battersea; Bo'ness; Bramcote and district; Carterton; Cresswell; Darley Dale; Deneholme; Dollar; Duffryn; East Finchley; Glasgow; Harringay; Harrogate (two); Leeds; Little Eaton; Longsight; Oxford; Paddington; Penygroes; Portsmouth (two); Rugby; Stonehouse (two); Tottenham (two); and Wooburn; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL AND LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Kilsyth, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Darvel; Fraserburgh; Grangemouth; Hawick; Newmilns; Selkirk; Stonehaven; and Sutherland; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AFRICA (No. 2, 1908).

Copy presented, of further Correspondence respecting the Independent State of the Congo [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Copy presented, of List of: (1) Schools in Boroughs and Urban Districts in England and Wales containing only one Public Elementary School, together with (2) Schools in Boroughs, Urban Districts, and Rural Parishes in England and Wales in which there is more than one Public Elementary School, but only one available for boys, or for girls, or for infants [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS AT PRICES OF 1900.

Copy presented, of Tables showing for each of the years 1900–7, the estimated value of Imports and Exports of the United Kingdom at the Prices prevailing in 1900, with an introductory Memorandum [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Annual Leave of Civil Service Upper Division Clerks.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Prime Minister if he will state what is the period of annual leave authorised for the upper division clerks of each class, and for staff officers in the Inland Revenue, Customs, Post Office, and Treasury.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The ordinary annual leave of officers drawing salary or placed on scales of salary in excess of those of the Second Division is fixed by Clause 7 of the Order in Council of 15th August, 1890, at not exceeding thirty-six week days during each of their first ten years of service and forty-eight week days thereafter, exclusive in both cases of Christmas Day, Good Friday, the King's birthday, and (subject to the convenience of the public service) the four Bank Holidays. The leave of staff officers in the Departments referred to varies from twenty-one to forty-eight days according to salary and length of service, but I understand that the whole question of leave in the Post Office is now under consideration.

Pollution of the River Ballybritt.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say whether the Local Government Board has received representations protesting against the pollution of the River Ballybritt, in County Tipperary; is he aware that a large population in this district are solely dependent for their water supply for domestic purposes on this river; and, in view of the danger to the health of the people residing in this district and the damage already done to the fish in the river, will steps be at once taken to fully enforce the provisions of the Public Health (Ireland) Acts against the persons who are openly and maliciously causing this nuisance and danger to their neighbours.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board have received complaints to the effect stated, and the local medical officer of health has reported that a number of families are dependent for water on the river in question. It appears that the pollution of the river arises from sheep dipping, and the Board have been advised that pollution of this character is not covered by any of the Acts under which the sanitary authority can proceed. It is, however, open to the persons concerned to take legal proceedings for their own protection.

Irish Primary Education Grant.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH (Leitrim, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland when will an announcement be made concerning the new grant which has been promised for Irish primary education.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I cannot yet name a precise date, but I hope it will be soon. As I have already stated, the new grant will probably amount to over £100,000, but certain details remain to be settled.

Reinstatement of Evicted Tenants at Kiltoghert and Carrick-on-Shannon.

MR. THOMAS F. SMYTH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the Estates Commissioners would purchase grazing farms in the vicinity of Kiltoghert and Carrick-on-Shannon, County Leitrim, with a view to reinstating evicted tenants and enlarging uneconomic holdings, in case that the owners, Messrs. Whyte, Vaugh, Lawder, Gumley, and Mrs. Harrison, were willing to sell.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are prepared to consider the question of purchasing any untenanted lands which the owners referred to may offer to sell to them.

Prosecutions for Walking with Unlighted Cycles at Night in Ireland.

MR. BOULTON (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will take the necessary steps to stop the prosecution of cyclists in Ireland for walking with bicycles at night without a light, and confine such prosecutions to cases where cyclists are riding machines without lights, as is the case in England.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) There is a slight difference between the terms of the statutes regulating the carrying of lamps at night upon bicyles in England and Ireland respectively. In Ireland, under the strict construction of the section dealing with the matter, a bicycle which is upon a public road at night requires to be lighted whether it is being ridden or not. It is, however, not the practice of the police to prosecute unless the bicycle is being ridden. Only one case has come to the knowledge of the Inspector-General in which a prosecution was instituted against a person for having an unlighted bicycle upon which he was not riding, and in that case it was decided to withdraw the prosecution.

Report of Belfast Health Commission.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the difficulty experienced in Belfast in procuring copies of the Report of the recent Health Commission; whether he would order that copies be sent to members of all the public boards in Belfast and to all public libraries and institutions; and whether he will consider the advisability of appointing some central agency in Belfast where this and other official publications can be readily obtained.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) My attention has been called to this matter. The cost of printing the Report will fall on the Belfast Corporation, and the Local Government Board have suggested to them that arrangements should be made for the printing of further copies to meet the demand of the public, but up to the present the corporation have not taken any steps with that object. The Board have furnished copies out of the supply at their disposal to the public boards in Belfast who have asked for them.

Case of William Gilchrist, Letter-carrier of Granard—Application for Pension

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been called to the case of William Gilchrist, who, after a service of thirty-five years as letter-carrier in Granard, has had his services discontinued, and is now left practically destitute in his old age, the small grant recently made to him being almost useless for its purpose; and will he reconsider his case with a view to giving this man a small pension.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) As I have already informed the hon. Member by letter, Gilchrist is not eligible for any award under the Superannuation Acts, which make no provision for those who, like Gilchrist, give only a part of their time to the service of the State. The gratuity which he has received is the utmost that can be awarded to him from official funds; but it is possible the Rowland Hill Benevolent Fund may be able to give him some assistance, and I will cause his case to be brought to the notice of the Committee

British and German Unemployment Statistics.

MR. HADDOCK (Lancashire, North Lonsdale): To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state in what respects the basis upon which official Returns of unemployment are collected in Germany differs from that of the United Kingdom; and whether any estimate can be made of the latest British unemployment figure if the Returns were collected on the German basis.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I am afraid that the subject of the comparability of British and German statistics of unemployment is too large to be dealt with satisfactorily in reply to a Question. A detailed memorandum discussing the matter will be printed as an Appendix to the forthcoming Report of an inquiry into the cost of living in German towns. I may, however, state that the main points of difference may be grouped under three heads: (1) the inferior facilities possessed by German trade unions for recording the total number of their unemployed members; (2) the smaller proportion of members of German trade unions who are qualified to receive unemployed benefit; (3) the different proportions in which the various groups of trades are represented in the two sets of statistics. Owing to the nature of these differences it is not possible to form such an estimate as the hon. Member asks for in the latter part of his Question.

Persons in Receipt of Old-Age Pensions from Friendly Societies.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can furnish any information with regard to the number of registered friendly societies paying old-age pensions to members, the number of members in receipt of such pensions, the age limit in each case, and the amount of the pension.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) There are seventy-five registered friendly societies who are known to provide for the grant of superannuation benefits, and of these societies 283,071 members subscribe for superannuation benefits. The registry of friendly societies has no information as to the number of members of such societies who are actually in receipt of pensions, or the amount of the pensions drawn. The age limit varies in different cases, but the most general age at which pensions begin to be payable appears to be sixty-five.

Civil Service Opportunities for Boy Clerks.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury how many of the successful candidates who obtained service marks in the Second Division examination of March last were ex-boy clerks; and, in view of the fact that the age at which boy clerks obtain these appointments is higher than hitherto, will he make such arrangements so that these boys may obtain appointments at an earlier age than at present.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) Thirteen successful candidates who had been boy clerks obtained service marks in the last examination. I see no reason for altering the limits of age for the Second Division examination.

Effect of Introduction of Indian Customs Tariff on British Fiscal System.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can say what would be the approximate yield to the Exchequer, on the basis of the imports of 1907, if the Indian Customs tariff were introduced into the fiscal system of the United Kingdom.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It would be impossible to answer the hon. Member's Question without elaborate calculations involving the expenditure of considerable time and trouble; and I am afraid that the result would not be of sufficient value to justify me in directing such calculations to be made.

Irish Land Purchase—Conversion of Realty into Personalty.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland if his attention has been called to the inconveniences caused by the questions which have arisen in numerous cases in the Irish Courts in reference to conversion of realty into personalty by agreements for sale between landlord and tenant, the difficulty as to when conversion takes place, and if there is reconversion in cases where advances are refused, and the question raised in the recent case of Carton *v.* Blount as to what is to be done with the income in the often long period between lodgment of the purchase agreements and the sanction of the advance; and will he consider the desirability of endeavouring, in the promised Land Bill, to deal with these questions, which in various forms take up a good deal of the time of the Land Commission, to the loss of owners and profit only of the legal profession.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) I have consulted the Judicial Commissioner of the Land Commission on this subject, and he informs me that there is no uncertainty in the law, and no difficulty in administering it other than that which is inherent in the matter, and which would equally exist if the legislation suggested by the hon. and learned Member were effected. Moreover, I learn from the Judicial Commissioner that very little of his time has been taken up in considering such questions, as most of the estates which come before the Land Commission are in settlement. I see no reason, therefore, for introducing legislation to amend the existing law as applying to sales under the Land Purchase Acts. On the contrary, I think it would produce confusion and inconvenience to have a different rule as to conversion existing in these cases from that which applies generally to all sales of real property.

Medical Officers of Health.

MR. BRODIE (Surrey, Reigate): To ask the President of the Local Government Board if he will state how many whole-time medical officers of health there are in England and Wales, exclusive of London, and how many of this number come up for periodical re-appointment; and whether the Board is prepared to recommend the electing authorities of those who are re-elected periodically to appoint them without reference to time

(*Answered by Mr. John Burns.*) I can only give the information desired as regards cases in which the appointment is sanctioned by the Local Government Board, and thus it does not extend to medical officers of health appointed for counties or for the majority of county boroughs. There are 104 medical officers of health for districts outside London who give their whole time to the duties of that office either by itself or in conjunction with some other appointment of a public character. Of this number seventy-five are subject to periodic reappointment. The officers referred to include those who act for more than one district. The total number of districts for which they act is 345. The question of the tenure of office of these officers is receiving my attention, but I may state that in suitable cases it is already the practice of the Local Government Board to recommend local authorities to appoint their medical officer of health permanently or for a lengthened period.

Import of Plated Goods.

Mr. JAMES HOPE: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can cause instructions to be given to the Customs authorities to keep a separate record of the imports of plated goods.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The question of keeping a separate record of imported plated goods is to be referred by the Board of Customs to the Joint Revision Committee appointed by them and the Board of Trade, which meets annually in the autumn to consider and report upon any changes proposed in the Accounts of the Import and Export Trade of the United Kingdom for the following year.

Case of Edward Dennis, late Hammerman of Devonport Dockyard—Application for Compensation for Injury.

Sir JOHN BENN (Devonport): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether his attention has been called to the case of Edward Dennis, late established hammerman, Devonport Dockyard, who has recently been invalided from the service as the result of an operation last November in the Royal Naval Hospital, necessitated by an injury sustained in the course of his employment; whether he is aware that the man's power to contribute to his own support is now totally destroyed; and whether, in view of this fact, he will have the case reconsidered and adequate compensation awarded.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) When examined in February last, Edward Dennis was found to be suffering from symptoms not attributable to the injury sustained in the course of his employment, and of quite recent date. It is not, therefore, possible to increase the compensation already given to the man.

Advertising of Sale of Admiralty Stores, etc.

Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): To ask the Civil Lord of the Admiralty if he will state in what newspapers the Admiralty advertise forthcoming sales of warships for breaking up, tenders, surplus stores, etc.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) Sales of obsolete ships and of old surplus stores are advertised in newspapers of large circulation, irrespective of politics, which are considered from experience to be the best media for reaching prospective buyers. The Admiralty auctioneers make proposals before each sale as to the newspapers in which to insert advertisements, and these are approved and amended, if necessary, by the Admiralty, having regard in each case to the locality of the sale.

Overtime for Boys at Fairfield Shipbuilding Works.

Mr. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company, Govan, have boys working overtime on board H.M.S. "Indomitable," many of whom are under the age that boys are allowed to work overtime; whether he is aware that when the factory inspector visited the ship on the evening of the 15th instant word was passed around that the inspector was coming, with the result that many of the lads hid and were not seen by him; and whether he will take steps to prevent this company working young boys overtime.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) It is reported to me that the factory inspector when visiting these works on the 15th instant found three young persons at work after legal hours. Whether there were many others similarly employed who escaped detection I am unable to say. Proceedings are being taken against the firm, and the works will be kept under observation in order to put a stop to such employment.

Prosecution for Sale of Adulterated Butter in Ireland.

MR. W. T. WILSON: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a case tried before the County Justices at Bolton, on the 18th instant, when a small shopkeeper was prosecuted for selling adulterated butter, and fined £20 and costs; whether he is aware that the prosecuting solicitor stated that the Bench had not to deal with a small shopkeeper but with people of substance in Ireland; and whether he will institute proceedings against those people who are placing on the market, as pure butter, margarine which, on analysis, was proved to contain 9½ per cent. of water and 80 per cent. of fats other than butter.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) My right hon. friend has asked me to reply to this Question. Our attention has been drawn to the case to which my hon. friend refers, and in view of the statement of the solicitor for the prosecution we are making further inquiry into the matter.

Importations of Foreign Hay and Straw.

MR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board of Agriculture has withdrawn the prohibition to the importation of foreign hay and straw; if not, whether he will name the European countries from which hay and straw may be imported; whether the importation of hay and straw from these European countries is allowed because these countries are free from cattle disease; and, if so, whether the Board of Agriculture is prepared to allow the importation of cattle for immediate slaughter from these countries.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is in the negative. The prohibition does not extend to hay or straw imported from Denmark, Norway, or Sweden, owing to the fact that the sanitary laws of these countries give a sufficient safeguard against the risk of the importation of foot-and-mouth disease by means of such hay or straw. The Board are not, however, prepared to allow the importation of cattle from the countries mentioned.

Re-valuation of Dublin.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many tenements have to be valued for the carrying out of the re-valuation of Dublin, and how many have, up to the present, been surveyed and re-valued; and is the Commissioner of Valuation yet in a position to state approximately when the re-valuation will be completed.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The number of tenements to be re-valued is estimated at 47,000, and of these over 14,000 have been surveyed. The Commissioner of Valuation is not in a position to say when the re-valuation will be completed.

Temporary Offices under the Local Government Board.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many temporary offices there are at present under the Local Government Board; and how many temporary offices under that Board have been during the past three years made permanent, with the names and salaries of those holdings such offices.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) There are nine classes of temporary posts at present under the Local Government Board, excluding typists, boy clerks, fire lighters, and housemaids, who are employed by the week. One temporary post has been made permanent during the period named, that of the assistant engineer, Mr. A. D. Price, whose present salary is £500 a year.

Extension of Poisons and Pharmacy Bill to Ireland.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill does not apply to Ireland; if he is aware that this Bill gives power to county councils in England and Scotland to issue licences to traders other than chemists to sell such articles as sheep dips, weed killers, and other poisonous substances commonly used by farmers; and if he will see to it that the Bill is extended to Ireland, in view of the fact that the necessity for relaxation of the restrictions imposed by the Act of 1868 is far greater in Ireland than in Great Britain.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The Joint Committee has, at my instance, inserted a clause for the application of this Bill to Ireland.

Tuberculosis in Ireland.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state if the recent campaign against tuberculosis in Ireland has resulted in the diminution of that disease, and, if so, to what extent; whether any, and how many, of the local authorities have undertaken organised action to combat the disease; and whether the Government propose to introduce legislation on the subject embodying the recommendations of the leading Irish medical specialists as to the best means of prevention and cure of the disease.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) It is too soon to form an estimate of the results accruing from the measures recently taken with a view to the prevention of tuberculosis. All the sanitary authorities in the County of Cork, some of those in County Dublin, and the Belfast Corporation and board of guardians have already taken steps for the provision of sanatorium accommodation, and there is reason to believe that many other counties and cities are merely awaiting the promised legislation before taking similar steps. The measure to be introduced by the Government will embody the principles which are recognised to be the most effective that can be taken by local authorities for the prevention and cure of the disease.

Dismissal of Irish Assistant School Teachers.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the number of assistant teachers dismissed for alleged inefficiency or incompetence since the introduction of the new programme in 1900; whether any, and how many, received compensation, and the amount of the same; whether the question of change to another school had been considered in connection with any of these dismissals; and whether the fact of such teachers being dismissed for inefficiency from one school would debar them from employment in another.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that since 1st April, 1907, salary has been withdrawn from ten assistant teachers for inefficiency. No compensation can be given in such cases. It is not the practice of the Commissioners to recognise an assistant who has been dismissed for inefficiency; but if any manager should be willing to accept the services of such an assistant the Commissioners would be willing to consider the manager's representations.

Strength of the Army.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the figures given at page 11 of the Estimates, viz., 169,114 and 161,302, correctly represent the establishment and strength of the Army on 1st January, 1908; if the difference between these figures, viz., 7,812, accurately represents the numbers by which the Army was below establishment on the date named; and, if so, to what extent and by what means has the deficit been reduced between 1st January and the present date.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The right hon. Gentleman has taken the first figure from the wrong column in the Estimates. The correct particulars are as follows—

	Establishment.	Strength.	Difference.
1st January 1908 - - -	169,723	161,302	8,421
1st May 1908 - - - -	169,114	162,220	6,894

The reduction of the difference is due to a net decrease in wastage, recruiting having been satisfactory.

Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER: To ask the Secretary of State for War why the establishment of the Army is given in Army Estimates as 169,114, seeing that it was on 6th April 157,958, a difference of 11,156; and why the strength of the Army is given in Army Estimates as 161,302, seeing that it was on the 6th April 153,755, a difference of 7,547.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The right hon. Gentleman has fallen into the same error as the hon. Member for the Blackpool Division. The figures given on 6th April referred to the number of non-commissioned officers and men on 1st March, 1908. The figures shown on page 11 of the Army Estimates refer to the number of all ranks on 1st January, 1908.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Naval Casualties.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what was the casualty of importance which was subsequently found to have been omitted from the Return issued last year for the year 1906; and what new circumstances have arisen which prevent the Return of minor casualties being as complete as in former years.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire, N.): The casualty referred to was a breakdown of the engines of H.M.S. "Terrible," due to a broken shaft. The omission was due to inadvertence. The Return of minor casualties is not now less complete than in former years.

Naval Coaling Stations in the Southern Pacific.

Mr. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if the arrangements lately made or now in negotiation with the Commonwealth of Australia include obligations regarding coaling stations on the Australian coast or in the Southern Pacific.

Mr. McKENNA: The Answer to the hon. Member's Question is in the negative.

Mr. R. DUNCAN asked whether the reply in the negative indicated a negative policy in regard to facilities for coaling His Majesty's ships on the Australian coast or in the Southern Pacific.

Mr. McKENNA: No, Sir. The reply in the negative applies only to the particular Question which the hon. Member asked me.

Mr. R. DUNCAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiry into this subject?

Mr. McKENNA: I have made inquiry, but I will certainly make further inquiry.

Tidworth Stables.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the new stables at Tidworth, intended to house the horses of the 2nd Dragoons (Scots Greys), which it was stated would be finished at the latest in September, 1907, have yet been completed.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): If the noble Earl will refer to my reply to a Question put on this subject by the hon. Member for the Gainsborough Division on the 11th instant, he will find that I informed the House that it is hoped these barracks will be completed by the end of next month. The delay has been occasioned by abnormally bad weather.

EARL WINTERTON: Has the delay been caused solely by bad weather?

MR. HALDANE: Yes, I believe that has been the sole cause.

Cavalry Schools—Training of Yeomanry Officers.

EARL WINTERTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that the exclusion of Yeomanry officers from the courses at the cavalry school has given rise to widespread dissatisfaction; and if he will consider the advisability of so increasing the accommodation of the school as to render it sufficiently large for the accommodation of both Regulars and Yeomen.

MR. HALDANE: As I have already explained to the House, it is considered that attachment to a Regular cavalry regiment is more beneficial to Yeomanry officers than attendance at the cavalry school.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): Has the right hon. Gentleman taken steps to find out the opinions of Yeomanry officers as to whether they do or do not obtain more valuable knowledge at the schools?

MR. HALDANE: The General Staff are constantly in communication with Yeomanry commanders.

EARL WINTERTON: But has the right hon. Gentleman consulted the Yeomanry Association on this point?

MR. HALDANE: We have a Yeomanry Committee.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Is the abolition of the school due to a desire for efficiency or for economy?

MR. HALDANE: There has been no abolition. The school is required for cavalry officers.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: Does the right hon. Gentleman consider attachment to a cavalry regiment produces greater efficiency than a school?

MR. HALDANE: I am so advised.

Foreign Cavalry Schools.

EARL WINTERTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that both the French and German cavalry schools are superior in accommodation and equipment to the cavalry school in this country; and, if so, what steps he proposes to take.

MR. HALDANE: The French and German cavalry schools are old-established institutions intended to train the officers and non-commissioned officers of cavalry in equitation and the various duties of the cavalry arm. These schools are, therefore, naturally superior as regards accommodation and equipment to the English school at Netheravon, which is in its infancy and has to deal with a much smaller cavalry force.

EARL WINTERTON: Does the right hon. Gentleman consider it a satisfactory state of affairs that we should in this matter be so inferior to foreign nations?

[No Answer was returned.]

The Mohmand Expedition.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is now in a position to state the precise objects of the Mohmand expedition; when those objects are likely to be attained; and what terms have been offered to the tribes against whom we are fighting.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg also to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India what are precisely the offences alleged against the Mohmands; and what are the dates of those offences upon which the Secretary of State authorised a punitive invasion of a neighbouring State and the destruction of the food supplies of the people.

Sir H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): May I also ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he can make any statement for the information of the House regarding the raids on British territory which have led to the present punitive expedition against the Mohmands, and whether there are any special causes for the unrest among these hillmen which would account for their recent conduct?

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.): On the night of 24th March two villages in the area under the direct administration of the Government of India beyond the limits of tribal territory, were attacked by Mohmands, two Hindus being killed; and on the night of 30th March a third village in our territory was raided, a Hindu being carried off. By the middle of April the gathering of armed Mohmands on the border had increased to a force estimated at 5,000 men, led by influential Mullahs. In order to protect our villages from attack, it became necessary to strengthen selected posts between Shabkadr and Abazai. On the 19th, 20th, and 21st April the Mohmands fired on patrols in our territory, killing and wounding British subjects; and on the night of the 21st they invaded our territory, fired into the village of Shankargarh, also into our camps, and cut telephone and telegraph wires. On the night of the 22nd they attacked all our military posts, raided two villages, and attempted to destroy the bridge of boats over the Kabul River near Peshawar. The next day the Government of India were authorised by His Majesty's Government to take such military action as they might consider necessary, subject to the principles of the policy laid down by His Majesty's Government on the occasion of the Zakka Khel expedition, that no steps were to be taken leading towards permanent occupation or extension of our responsibility in tribal territory. On 24th April, British troops under General Willcocks attacked the Mohmand forces in the positions they had taken up on our border, and put them to flight. The force of the Mohmands engaged was estimated at 4,000 men. Efforts were made by our officers to induce a jirgah representing the tribes to come in and effect a settlement, but this was unsuccessful. The tribes were allowed until 10th May to send in their jirgah; they failed to do so, and sent insulting replies. On 13th May General Willcocks was ordered to advance with instructions that the object of his expedition was punitive, and that he should let it be widely known that the Government had no intention to interfere with the *status quo* as regards the position of the tribes. The punitive operations have so far been carried out successfully by General Willcocks. It is hoped that in a few days these operations will be concluded and the British forces withdrawn. No special grievances are known to exist, and none have been made known by the tribes. The general cause of the outbreak is, presumably, religious excitement, due to the disappointment felt by the fanatical Mullahs at the speedy settlement arrived at with the Zakka Khel, extinguishing their expectation of the outbreak of a holy war. The terms to be offered to the tribes must depend in each case on the attitude of the tribe concerned. The tribes have been informed, as I have explained, that there is no intention of disturbing their relations with the British Government. Our anticipation is that a settlement somewhat similar to that with the Zakka Khel may be arrived at.

Mr. MACKARNESS asked whether the attention of the hon. Gentleman had been called to a telegram in *The Times* of that day stating that on 24th May an emissary arrived from the tribesmen asking for terms, that General Willcocks refused to see the emissary, and whether this action was taken with the knowledge and the sanction of the Secretary of State.

Mr. BUCHANAN: I have seen the telegram in *The Times*. Of course I have no means of confirming or of denying the details given in it. The information we have is to the effect that certain portions of the Mohmand tribe endeavoured to enter into negotiations with General Willcocks, that some sections of the tribesmen have been successful, and that other sections have not been successful.

MR. LUPTON: Is it in accordance with the instructions of the Government that the troops destroyed the food supplies that were required for the inhabitants after the soldiers had run away?

MR. BUCHANAN: The instructions given to General Willcocks were the same as those that were given in regard to the Zakka Khel expedition.

***MR. REES** (Montgomery Boroughs): Can the country of the Mohmands in any sense be described as a neighbouring State?

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think that I should so describe it.

MR. LUPTON: Is it a fact that in the Zakka Khel country the troops burned the crops?

MR. BUCHANAN: I think that I have answered that Question already.

MR. LUPTON: If the troops did not burn the crops in the Zakka Khel country and they are now burning the crops in the Mohmand country, can the instructions be said to be identical? Is that a "method of barbarism"?

MAJOR ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): Has the Hindoo—a British subject—who was carried off been rescued?

MR. BUCHANAN was understood to reply that he had no information as to this.

Indian Medical Service.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether it is necessary for Indian gentlemen to come over to England in order to enter the India Indian Medical Service; and whether His Majesty's Government will advise the Government of India to hold examinations for the Indian Medical Service simultaneously in India.

MR. BUCHANAN: To the first part of the Question the reply is in the affirmative. It is not contemplated to hold examinations for the Indian Medical Service simultaneously in England and India.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) asked whether this arrangement prevented qualified Indian students from obtaining positions to which they would be otherwise entitled.

MR. BUCHANAN: They are under the disadvantage that they have to come over here for examination.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: Is it intended to make any change in that respect?

MR. BUCHANAN: No, Sir.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.) Is the hon. Gentleman aware that a Resolution was carried by this House recommending that these examinations should be held simultaneously in India and England? I think the hon. Member voted for it in his unregenerate days.

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think I did.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Perhaps you were more discreet at that time.

DR. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the chief appointments at the hospitals and medical schools and colleges in India are confined to members of the Indian Medical Service; and whether His Majesty's Government will advise the Government of India to open these important appointments to Indian subjects of the King, without bias of race, creed, or colour.

MR. BUCHANAN: It is the case that a certain number of appointments in the Presidency hospitals and medical schools are reserved for members of the Indian Medical Service. That service is recruited by open competition in which Indian subjects are freely admitted. The Secretary of State is not wholly satisfied with existing arrangements and is in communication with the Government of India on this subject.

Indian Plague Death Rate.

DR. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India what is the death rate from plague for the first quarter of this year as compared with the rate for last year in the Punjab Bombay Presidency, United Provinces, and the whole of India respectively.

MR. BUCHANAN: The incidence of plague deaths per mille of the population in the first quarter of this year was Punjab, 0·6; Bombay Presidency, 0·8; United Provinces, 0·3; whole of India 0·2. For the corresponding quarter of 1907 the incidence was: Punjab, 7·6; Bombay Presidency, 2·1; United Provinces, 2·4; India, 1·3. The total number of plague deaths in India was 68,648 in the first quarter of this year, compared with 380,236 deaths in the corresponding quarter of 1907.

MR. LUPTON: Is it not the fact that the plague has been kept alive in India by the system of inoculation for the last eleven years?

MR. BUCHANAN: I do not think there is any foundation for that suggestion.

MR. LUPTON: But was not evidence given before the Royal Commission proving that?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has got his Answer.

Indian Justiciary.

DR. RUTHERFORD: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State for India has received a memorial from the barrister practising in the Madras Presidency pointing out that the increase in the number of Judges in the Madras High Court will involve a decrease in the number of Indian Judges, unless the vacancy caused by the decease of Mr. Justice Boddam is filled by an Indian barrister; and whether the Secretary of State will decide that two at least out of the seven Judges of that High Court shall be Indians.

MR. BUCHANAN: The Secretary of State is aware that such a memorial is on the way to him from the Government of Madras, but he has not yet received it. The appointment to which the hon. Member refers has already been offered to an Indian barrister, who yesterday declined it. The Secretary of State is not prepared to advise that a fixed number of Judgeships of the Madras High Court shall be reserved either for Indians or for Europeans.

Kabul River Railway.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the cessation of work on the Kabul River Railway beyond mile 300 is final, or whether there is still the intention of making progress with the railway after the pacification of the Mohmand country; and, in the latter case, whether he will state what is the reason for the prolongation of the line, and to what stations it is to lead.

MR. BUCHANAN: No decision has been arrived at as to the prolongation of the Kabul River Railway beyond mile 300, nor is any proposal for such prolongation at present before the Secretary of State.

Indian Appeal Case.

MR. LAIDLAW (Renfrewshire, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if Shamerendra Chandra Deb Barman appealed to the Law Courts in India against his being excluded from the office of Jubraj when his brother became Rajah of Hill Tipperah; and, if so, did the Court confirm or reject his claim.

MR. BUCHANAN: A suit was instituted in the British Courts in 1904 by the person named in the Question for the declaration of his title to succeed, on the death of the present Rajah, to certain estates in British India which form part of the hereditary property of the Rajahs of Hill Tipperah. The case, I understand, was dismissed.

Indian Bomb Outrage.

MR. O'GRADY (Leeds, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India if he will state the reason that the trial of the men arrested in connection with the bomb outrage has been transferred from the Sessions Court at Calcutta, where the trial would have been presided over by a puisne Judge, to the Court of the district magistrate at Alipur, in the suburbs; and whether the Judge in the latter Court is a member of the Civil Service, combining in his position executive and judicial functions.

Mr. BUCHANAN: The preliminary inquiry is being conducted at Alipur because the offence was committed within the jurisdiction of the magistrate of the twenty-four parganas. If the accused are committed to the Sessions they will be tried there by a Judge who, though a member of the Civil Service, does not combine in his person executive and judicial functions, and if convicted by him they will have open to them an appeal to the High Court.

Anglo-Indian Press.

Mr. O'GRADY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware of the provocative writings in the Anglo-Indian Press in India towards Native opinions and constitutional reform movements; and whether, in view of the fact that such writings excite disaffection towards the Government, the provisions of the Penal Code will be applied to such Anglo-Indian papers as to those papers already suppressed under the terms of the code.

Mr. BUCHANAN: Without expressing any opinion as to the effect of the articles referred to by the hon. Member, I may say that the provisions of the Indian Penal Code of course apply to the Anglo-Indian Press, as to all other Indian publications, and would in case of necessity be enforced in the same way as against other papers. Papers are not "suppressed" under the terms of the Code.

Mr. O'GRADY: Will the India Office take into consideration the advisability of defining under the Penal Code what is sedition?

Mr. BUCHANAN: That is a much wider subject, which hardly arises out of the Question on the Paper.

Mr. O'GRADY: Is the word "disaffection" to be defined as sedition, and in view of the fact that the Anglo-Indian Press make people disaffected will they come under the terms of the Penal Code?

Mr. BUCHANAN: I cannot answer that. The prosecutions have taken place under Article 124 of the Code, and to that I must refer the hon. Member.

Casa Blanca Bombardment—British Claims for Compensation.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to what source His Majesty's Government look for payment of compensation to British subjects who have suffered loss through the bombardment of Casa Blanca in August last; whether the Moorish Government will be in a position to find the money, or will the State Bank of Morocco be asked to advance the amount; and, if so, on what security.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): No decision has yet been arrived at as regards the actual arrangements for the payment of the sums that may be awarded as compensation to those who suffered loss in the bombardment of Casa Blanca. This question is closely related to the general question of Moorish indebtedness, and it is impossible during the present state of affairs in Morocco to state what the final arrangements will be.

Mr. ASHLEY: May we assume that they will get compensation of some sort?

Sir EDWARD GREY: We are most anxious to procure a satisfactory settlement, but every country which has commercial relations with Morocco must be suffering more or less from similar circumstances.

The Sugar Convention.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been given to the Protocol of 19th December, 1907, enabling Russia, though declared to be a sugar-bounty-giving state, to adhere to the Sugar Convention, 1902, on condition of her undertaking to restrict for six years her exportation of sugar to all countries whatever, excepting only Finland, Persia, and other Asiatic countries adjoining Russia, to the quantities specified in that Protocol; whether, seeing that this stipulation refers exclusively to the restriction of the exportation of Russian sugar and not to its importation, he will explain why His Majesty's Government, through Sir A. Hardinge, declared its non-assent to the stipulation tending to restrict not the exportation but the importation of Russian sugar; and will he explain what effect, if any, the non-assent of His Majesty's Government to restrictions not made in the Protocol can have on that Protocol.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. If the hon. Member will refer to the Parliamentary Paper, Commercial No. 1 (1908), he will see that the telegraphic instruction to His Majesty's Minister at Brussels referred to the "exportation" of Russian sugar. Through an error in transmission the word was given as "importation." I would point out, however, to the hon. Member that the change does not affect the sense, and secures the object which His Majesty's Government had in view.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston): Can the right hon. Gentleman explain what is the difference in economical effect between a Convention which prevents Russia sending sugar here, and one which prohibits our receiving sugar from Russia?

Sir EDWARD GREY: I am not aware of any Convention which prohibits us receiving sugar from Russia.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I am speaking of the Protocol.

Sir EDWARD GREY: Perhaps the hon. Member will give me notice of his Question.

***Mr. BOWLES**: In view of the right hon. Gentleman's statement that a restriction of the export of sugar from Russia has the same sense as a restriction of the import of such sugar into other countries, do His Majesty's Government still adhere to the opinion that this Protocol, to which they have bound this country without the consent of the House, inflicts no injury upon the import trade of the United Kingdom?

Sir EDWARD GREY said the one object in view was to secure to this country a free hand with regard to sugar coming here. That, he believed, they had secured.

Mr. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon) asked why Persia, a purely independent State, was bracketed with Finland?

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The right hon. Gentleman is not responsible for the form of the Question.

Mr. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, having regard to the fact that the Sugar Convention Act, 1903, was only passed for the purpose of giving effect to the Sugar Convention then existing and did not purport to authorise the making of Orders in Council or other Acts outside the provisions of that Convention, it is proposed to introduce legislation to give effect to the additional Act of the Sugar Convention.

Sir EDWARD GREY: Inasmuch as the additional Act does not extend our obligations, but on the contrary frees us from some obligations which existed under the original Act, no legislation appears to be necessary.

Mr. HERBERT asked whether a portion of the additional Act was not notice terminating the existing treaty on 1st September, 1908, and entering into a fresh treaty for five years, and would the right hon. Gentleman explain how the Act of Parliament authorising——

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. Member had better give notice of that Question.

Mr. VILLIERS (Brighton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign

Affairs whether any correspondence has taken place between Russia and His Majesty's Government with regard to the limitation of the export of Russian sugar to this country; and, if so, if he will lay the correspondence upon the Table of the House.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The question of limiting the export of Russian sugar to this country was not discussed between His Majesty's Government and Russia at all.

Mr. VILLIERS: Are we to understand that Russia suffered this restriction without protest?

Sir EDWARD GREY said that no protest was made. His Majesty's Government had nothing to do with limiting the export of Russian sugar; of course they were cognisant of the circumstances, but they undertook no obligation.

France and the Death Duties.

Mr. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if there is any precedent for the agreement between this country and France respecting Death Duties; and whether it is intended to make a similar agreement with any other country.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.): The French Government is the only one which has approached His Majesty's Government with a view to reciprocal arrangements of this kind; but, should similar overtures be made by any other Power, the propriety of entering into a similar agreement would be considered.

Mr. FELL: If any other agreement of this kind is entered into will care be taken to make it more explicit, seeing that the greatest doubt is expressed in many quarters as to what constitutes "people domiciled in France"?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I agree that there is some ambiguity, but I believe I have on a previous occasion explained the meaning to the hon. Member.

Indian Opium Exports.

Mr. HERBERT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether sanction has been given to the appointment by the Chinese Government of a Chinese official to reside in India and check the exports of opium from India to China in order to ensure that the obligation of the Indian Government to reduce the exports by one-tenth annually is carried out; whether any similar official has been appointed by the British Government in China to check the area under crop in the poppy-growing districts in China, in order to ensure that the reciprocal obligation of the Chinese Government for concurrent reduction of the production of opium is carried out; and, if not, whether such official will be appointed without delay.

Sir EDWARD GREY: An agreement has been come to between the Chinese Government and His Majesty's Government whereby a Chinese official may be stationed at Calcutta to watch the sales and export of opium, but with no power of interference of any description. The Chinese Government have not so far notified us of any appointment. No similar official has been appointed by His Majesty's Government to reside in China, nor is it their intention to make such an appointment. But His Majesty's Consular officers have standing instructions to report any available information as to the diminution of the cultivation of opium.

The Case of Mr. Luxenburg.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is yet in a position to make any statement as to Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg's claim against the Russian Government for his illegal arrest and incarceration at Odessa in March last.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The matter is still under consideration, and I regret that I can make no statement at present.

Captain CRAIG: I will repeat the Question this day week.

Import Duties.

Mr. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can say what would be the approximate yield to the Exchequer, on the basis of the imports of 1907, if the Indian Customs tariff were introduced into the fiscal system of the United Kingdom.

Mr. HAROLD COX: Does the Indian tariff reduce the taxes on a large number of raw materials?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs): It would be impossible to answer the hon. Member's Question without elaborate calculations involving the expenditure of considerable time and trouble, and I am afraid that the result would not be of sufficient value to justify me in directing such calculations to be made.

Mr. JAMES HOPE: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman work it out by next April?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: Perhaps the hon. Member would like to try his hand?

Mr. JAMES HOPE: With the assistance of the right hon. Gentleman.

Great Pan-Asiatic Tea Company.

Mr. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Great Pan-Asiatic Tea Company appears in the list of doubtful traders and companies in the current *Police Gazette*; what is the address of this firm; will he say how many other similar concerns are scheduled in the list referred to; is there an increase in the last published list; and how many of these firms have been re-scheduled from time to time, with the name of the oldest established and date of establishment.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland): The Secretary of State is afraid that he can add nothing to the Answers given by him to the hon. Member on the 13th and 20th instant.

Imperial Heraldry.

Mr. R. DUNCAN: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he can make any statement or lay upon the Table any Papers as to the decision come to with regard to the claims of Lyon and Ulster in relation to matters of Imperial heraldry.

Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL: The Secretary of State has asked me to answer this Question on behalf of his right hon. friend. The Secretary of State is in communication with the authorities concerned, but is not yet in a position to make any statement.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the hon. Member aware that newly created peers are simply pestered by demands from the Lyon's Office?

[No Answer was returned.]

Hops.

*Captain FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that during the last Inland Revenue year over 63,000,000 lbs. avoirdupois of hops were used in the production of beer, as against 24,000 lbs. of hop-substitutes in the same year, which is an equivalent of 1¼ ton of hops to every pound of substitute; and will he say what amount of extra employment would have been caused if hops had been used instead of this amount of substitute.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): Over 63,900,000 lbs. of hops were used in brewing in each of the last two years, whilst about 24,000 lbs. of hop substitutes were used in the year ended 30th September, 1906, and about 29,500 lbs. in the year ended 30th September, 1907. I have no information which would enable me to frame an estimate of the nature asked for.

*Captain FABER: Does the right hon. Gentleman adhere to the statement made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 14th April that one of the two causes of the hop industry being depressed was the use of hop substitutes ?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I should like to have the opportunity of reading the statement of my right hon. friend before saying how far I agree with it.

Captain FABER: Will the Chancellor of the Exchequer state whether he adheres to that statement ?

[No Answer was returned.]

Mr. KILBRIDE: (Kildare, S.): Were not these 24,000 lbs. of hop substitutes used by patriotic brewers in this country in order to make bigger dividends?

An HON. MEMBER: What proportion of the 63,000,000 lbs. was grown in this country and how much abroad ?

Mr. CHURCHILL: If the hon. Member will give me notice I will ascertain.

*Mr. LUPTON: Does not 63,000,000 lbs. represent 600,000 cwts., and would not a 40s. duty raise the price of that by £1,200,000?

[No Answer was returned.]

Coal Mining Statistics.

Mr. WADSWORTH (Yorkshire, W.R., Hallamshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will grant the Return relating to Wages and Profits in Coal-Mining standing on to-day's Notice Paper.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Negotiations have been for some time proceeding with the coal owners with a view to the supply of a voluntary Return with regard to the earnings of various classes of coal-miners for the purpose of completing the inquiry now being conducted by the Board of Trade as to the earnings of the working classes for comparison with the results of the Wages Census of 1886. I have great hopes that the coal owners will see their way to furnish these Returns, which have already been obtained or promised from every other important trade in the United Kingdom, including textiles, iron and steel, shipbuilding and engineering, building, clothing, railways, agriculture, and other industries. Pending the completion of a definite arrangement with the coal-owners I am unwilling to grant a Parliamentary Return covering, to a large extent, the same ground, but should such an arrangement unfortunately fall through I shall be glad to consider the matter further with my hon. friend.

Post Office Wages—Cost of the Living Calculations.

Mr. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his Department received a letter from the Postmaster-General dated 22nd August, 1905, requesting the Board of Trade to make inquiries regarding the cost of living in the various towns of the country, with a view of re-classifying the rates of pay for sorting clerks, telegraphists, and postmen; whether, by a further letter, dated 17th September, 1905, the Postmaster-General expressly asked that the rents given should include rates, and that it was also stipulated that only these localities in the different towns should be selected for comparison which were inhabited by persons drawn from the same classes as sorting clerks and postmen; and whether he will name the streets so selected by the Board of Trade for inquiry as suitable for sorting clerks and postmen in the postal district of Stoke-on-Trent.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The investigations of the Board of Trade were undertaken in order to ascertain particulars of the cost of living of the working classes in certain towns in such manner as would enable comparison to be made between one town and another. It was not possible to assume that any particular kind of tenement was occupied mainly by a particular grade of workmen, and the inquiry was, therefore, devoted to obtaining as much information as possible as to rents paid by workpeople for similar accommodation in the different towns selected, and not to the amounts expended on rents by persons of a particular class living in selected streets. In all cases, rents furnished by the Board of Trade to the Post Office included rates.

Monmouthshire Education Authority.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I beg to ask the President of the

Board of Education in how many cases in respect of the year 1906–7 the Monmouthshire local education authority was fined for understaffing schools which it was their duty to maintain; whether all of those schools were non-provided schools; whether, since then, the same authority has been fined for understaffing the Llangibby School; and whether he will grant a Return showing in what cases the Welsh local education authorities have been fined during the last five years for understaffing non-provided schools.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): No deductions were made in the annual grant payable in respect of the year 1906–7 to the Monmouth local education authority on account of their failure to provide a staff satisfying the minimum requirements of the Code. In twelve cases the Small Population Grant, for which a higher minimum staff is required, was refused or reduced. The grant for the Llangibby School for the year 1907–8 has not yet been paid. The preparation of a Return, such as that to which the noble Lord refers, would involve considerable labour, and I do not think the results would be commensurate with the cost incurred. The total number of cases in which the annual grant has been reduced in respect of schools in the area of each local education authority can be ascertained from Table 19 in the Statistical Volume published by the Board. The number in Wales (including both Council and Voluntary Schools) was thirty-three in the year 1905–6 and eleven in the year 1906–7.

Afforestation on Crown Lands in Carnarvonshire.

MR. ELLIS DAVIES (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if he will state in what parish or parishes in the county of Carnarvon the 403 acres of Crown lands which are not subject to rights of common are situate; and whether any, and, if so, what, portion of the land is of such a nature as could be adapted for afforestation.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I am informed that the 403 acres are in the parish of Bettws Garmon. A slate vein runs through the property, on which there is a quarry. It is not considered suitable for afforestation. The land, apart from the quarry, is all let in small holdings.

Darlington Engineering Dispute.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether he is aware, in connection with the engineering dispute at Darlington, that on the 14th instant two of the pickets who were not on duty at the time and were at least one mile from the shop in dispute, were stopped by a sergeant of police who inquired if they had seen the account in the newspapers of the conviction of pickets in Newcastle, and stated that they had better keep it in their minds as it would be their turn next; and, if so, whether he proposes to bring this infringement of personal rights before the attention of the Public Prosecutor.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields) was understood to say he was not aware if the facts were as stated, but assuming that they were he saw no ground for taking action. What was said to have been done did not amount to a criminal offence.

Treasury Counsel.

MR. BOWLES: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney-General whether he has recently appointed three gentlemen to be prosecuting counsel to the Treasury in London; whether any, and, if so, which, of these gentlemen is a Scotsman or an Irishman; and whether there was no Englishman qualified and competent for these posts.

SIR W. ROBSON: I appointed these gentlemen without inquiring as to their particular or local nationality in the United Kingdom. They are, however, I believe, all members of the English Bar, and, so far as I know, they are all Englishmen.

LORD R. CECIL: May I ask the hon. and learned Gentleman whether he will use his influence with his colleagues to see that a similar procedure is adopted with reference to all appointments in Scotland and Ireland?

SIR W. ROBSON: I cannot promise that I will. I myself take a somewhat Unionist view of this matter.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): Why should not an Irishman be appointed if he be the ablest man of the lot?

SIR W. ROBSON: I know of no reason whatever. In fact, I am not sure that in my recent appointments the hon. Member will not find an Irishman, though I do not profess always to be able to distinguish between an Irishman, an Englishman, and a Scotsman.

Irish Board of Agriculture—Veterinary Branch.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): On behalf of the hon. Member for the Ossory Division of Queen's County, I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether he is aware that, in the case of the three chief officials of the Department's veterinary branch, one enjoys a salary of £850 a year, being £150 in excess of the sum fixed for the post, and that the other two have had their salaries increased by £100 and £75 each during the past two years; whether he is also aware that there are gentlemen in the same branch who have fourteen years continuous service and who are doing superior duties, but who are denied entrance into the Second Division; and whether he can explain the reasons for the disparity of treatment in those cases.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOR IRELAND (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.): The suggestion in this Question that certain clerks in the veterinary branch of the Department have been unfairly treated by being denied promotion to the Second Division to which they were entitled is unfounded. There is no analogy between the cases of officers of from thirty to forty years service holding the higher positions and those of the subordinate clerks referred to.

Cahirciveen Evicted Tenant.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state what steps, if any, have been taken to reinstate Denis T. Sheehan, an evicted tenant, now living at Tiromoile, Cahirciveen, in his old holding.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The Estates Commissioners consider the applicant to be a suitable person to receive a holding in the event of their acquiring untenanted land in the locality, and the case has been referred to an inspector with the object of providing the applicant with a holding if possible.

MR. MOORE (Armagh, N.): Is this evicted tenant to go unprovided for while a Member of this House is given a farm and a grant?

MR. BIRRELL: I hope not.

Enniskillen Labourers' Cottages.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say whether the Local Government Board have yet taken any definite steps to have The Labourers (Ireland) Act, 1906, put into operation in the Enniskillen (No. 2) Rural District; is he aware that there is a real want for labourers' cottages in the district, and that the council is anxious to have the scheme proceeded with; and will the matter have his first attention.

MR. BIRRELL: As I have already informed the hon. Member, the delay in this matter was attributable to the clerk of the rural district council, who is now being called upon to resign. Should the council fail to submit an improvement scheme to the Local Government Board for confirmation at an early date, the Board will consider the propriety of taking steps under Section 9 of the Act of 1906. If, however, the council are anxious to proceed with the scheme as the hon. Member suggests, there will be no necessity for the Board to adopt compulsory measures.

Irish Local Government Board—Clerk in Charge of Accounts.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the clerk in charge of accounts under the Local Government Board applied to be placed upon the new maximum salary of his office before he was so placed; to whom did he apply; who recommended that he should be placed upon the new maximum salary; was the recommendation or application considered either by the Local Government Board or by the Treasury; and whether copies of the correspondence relating to this case will be available for inspection.

Mr. BIRRELL: On the passing of the Labourers Act the clerk in charge of accounts applied to the Local Government Board for an increase of salary, and his application was recommended by the Board to the favourable consideration of the Treasury. The Treasury fixed a new scale of salary for the post—namely, £350, rising by increments to £500; and gave authority for at once placing the existing clerk of accounts, whose then salary was £450, on the new maximum of £500. It would be contrary to practice to produce the correspondence between the Treasury and the Local Government Board, but the Public Accounts Committee, of which the hon. Gentleman is a member, will of course have full power to call for all Papers.

Irish Medical Inspectors.

Mr. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will explain the increase of £47 in the salaries for medical inspectors under the local Government Board contained in the Estimates for 1908–9, in view of the fact that no increase of salary for such inspectors is proposed this year.

Mr. BIRRELL: The increased provision in the Estimate for the current year is due to the fact that in May, 1907, two medical inspectors received increments of salary, having served for the necessary term of five years.

Mount Dillon River Floods.

Mr. JAMES O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the condition of the Mount Dillon River, North Roscommon, and to the results arising from the periodical overflowing of the same; and whether it is proposed by the Government to do anything to improve upon the present state of affairs in the districts affected.

Mr. BIRRELL: I have received representations as to the condition of the Mount Dillon River, and have consulted the Board of Works on the subject. I learn that the river is not in any drainage district, and that the kind of works desired by the people cannot be carried out except by the formation of such a district. In the circumstances it does not seem possible to undertake a drainage scheme for the locality at present.

Boyle Disturbances.

Mr. JAMES O'KELLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state whether the charge against Mr. Daniel Beirne, of Boyle, County Roscommon, of riotous behaviour in connection with an assembly of the people of the district at Hill Street last year has been withdrawn; whether the suspension order against Mr. Beirne's exercise of his magisterial functions has yet been annulled; and, if not, whether he can state when Mr. Beirne will be allowed to resume his duties as magistrate.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Crown does not intend to prosecute further in the case in question, but a formal *nolle prosequi* has not yet been entered. The Lord Chancellor informs me that Mr. Beirne's suspension from the exercise of magisterial powers has not yet been withdrawn, and he does not think it desirable to remove that suspension at present, but will consider the matter later on.

Pottinger Estates, North Antrim.

Mr. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state whether any negotiations have taken place with regard to the sale of the Pottinger estate, in North Antrim, formerly part of the Casement estate, in the parish of Culfeightrin; whether the agent of the estate has informed the tenants that the estate is in Chancery, and that offers of purchase must be made to the Lord Chancellor; whether any official information is available with regard to the position of this estate or, if not, whether he will order inquiries to be made with regard to it.

MR. BIRRELL: I am informed that the matter of this estate is in Lunacy. In June, 1907, an order was made by the Lord Chancellor authorising sales to the tenants, and the majority have since signed purchase agreements. The receiver has been instructed to submit for the Lord Chancellor's consideration any proposals which may be received from tenants not already included in the sale.

Crookenden and Carey Estate, Cavan.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say whether the Estates Commissioners have yet submitted their offer to purchase on the Crookenden and Carey estate, County Cavan; will he say when the inspectors reported on this estate; and in view of the effect of the delay which has already taken place to all concerned, will he, if the offer to purchase has not been already made, secure that the same be dealt with forthwith.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners' formal proposal has not yet been issued, but, as I informed the hon. Member last week, it is being prepared and will be issued with the least possible delay. The estate is a very large one comprising nearly 500 tenancies, and it has been found necessary to refer the papers back to the inspector several times. The inspector's original Report was received in May, 1907, but his final Report was only received during the present month.

Irish Treasury Remembrancer.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will give the terms of the Treasury Minute of 4th January, 1871, constituting the office of Treasury Remembrancer in Ireland; and whether he will state what was the system in operation before the constitution of that office.

MR. HOBHOUSE: The information required by the hon. Member is given below. Treasury Minute, dated 4th January, 1871.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Financial Secretary state to the Board that they have difficulty in deciding to their satisfaction many questions relating to Ireland, for want of local information as ample and as easily attainable as in similar cases arising in England or Scotland. Such local information is especially needed on account of the frequency of appeals to the Imperial Exchequer from that part of the United Kingdom, and in their opinion, it could be best supplied by a financial officer, appointed by and responsible to their Lordships, and occupying a position that would give the necessary weight to his opinion, and enable him to obtain a general knowledge of details of administration throughout the country, and to represent the Treasury on Commissions and in other duties of a similar nature. They remind the Board that Scotland possesses such an officer in the person of the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer, and it is evident that their Lordships appreciated the value of the service rendered by the late Mr. Henderson, when at his decease in 1869, they determined after minute and deliberate investigation to maintain his office as consultative, at a cost in excess of that required by its mere administrative functions. They further remind the Board that such an officer used to exist in Ireland. Up to 1837 the Vice-Treasurer and Teller of the Exchequer in that country was a high officer, possessing large financial powers. In that year Parliament empowered the Treasury to make regulations consolidating and simplifying the amounts of the Receipt and issue of Public money. The office of Vice-Treasurer and Teller of the Exchequer was in consequence reduced, and in lieu thereof a Paymaster of Civil Services in Dublin was created, an officer subject to the Treasury, who in addition to the functions which his name implies, was to undertake any other business which the Treasury might call upon him to perform. In 1860, on the death of Mr. Grey, the then Paymaster, this office was abolished, and the Pay Office at Dublin became merely a branch of the General Pay Office, under charge of a clerk detached from the office in London. The Treasury, therefore, has now been for a period of ten years without a special and confidential adviser in Dublin. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Stansfeld state their conviction that the experiment has not been successful, although the want has not been felt during the greater portion of the time, because the Board were able at all times to avail themselves the large experience and knowledge of Mr. Hamilton, their Permanent Secretary, and they submit to the Board that no time should be lost in supplying the deficiency. It is obvious that the Consultative Officer, to be of any service, must in that capacity be independent of all authority save the Treasury, in fact that he should, as far as possible, represent the Treasury in Ireland. It is also desirable that he should be attached to some existing Office, both for the sake of economy, and because his consultative functions will not engross his whole time. But there are only two Departments in Dublin to which such an officer could be attached, the Board of Works, and the Pay Office, and of these two Departments it is clearly the Pay Office only whose duties have any affinity to the local Treasury functions for which it is advisable that provision should now be made. The Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. Stansfeld state further that inasmuch as the Clerk in charge of the Dublin Branch is about to retire, the consideration of a change in the constitution of the Pay Officer at Dublin ought to be entered upon, if at all, at once. They therefore recommend that no new appointment should be made by the Pay Office, but that when retaining the Dublin Office as a branch of the Paymaster-General's Department an office should be created resembling that of the Queen's and Lord Treasurer's Remembrancer in Scotland, and holding, as near as may be, the same relations to the Treasury and Pay Office; that a sufficient salary should be attached to the post; that care should be taken to select a fully competent person to fill it and that he should in virtue of that office be placed in charge of the Paymaster-General's Branch Office in Dublin with the title of Treasury Remembrancer and Deputy-Paymaster for Ireland, and that he should also perform the duty of Receiver of Constabulary without any remuneration in excess of the salary attached to his office. My Lords concur. Inform the Pay Office, and request the Paymaster-General to take no steps for detaching a clerk from London to conduct the business of the Pay Office in Dublin. My Lords will select an officer for the new post to whom they will assign a salary of £1,200. The necessary instructions defining his relations to this Board and the Pay Office will be given in the Minute appointing him.

Female Suffrage—Government Declaration.

MR. HERBERT: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether His Majesty's Government still adheres to the principle contained in its previous declarations that no revolutionary change in the constitution, such as the grant of the Parliamentary franchise to women, ought to be assented to by Parliament until after the question had been definitely submitted to the country as a practical measure at a general election.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): So far as I am aware no declaration in the sense suggested has been made by or on behalf of the Government. Certainly the late Prime Minister never expressed or held any such opinion. Individual Members of the Government who have dealt with the matter have merely given expression to their own personal opinion.

Board of Agriculture Vote.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he will reconsider his intention to take the Vote for the Board of Agriculture on Wednesday, 10th June, as that date is very inconvenient for a great many Members representing agricultural constituencies.

MR. ASQUITH: No, Sir. I am afraid that it will not be possible to change the date.

MR. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that several Members of the House on June 10th will be serving their country with the Yeomanry, myself included.

MR. ASQUITH: I am very sorry that we shall not have the presence of the hon. Gentleman, but I rejoice that he will be absent in so good a cause. I am afraid that the same consideration would apply whatever Vote was put down, because the Territorial Army is not entirely officered by agricultural Members.

Indian Budget.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can state when the Indian Budget will be taken, and whether adequate time will be allotted for the proper consideration of the causes of the present unrest in India.

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot say, as yet, when the Indian Budget will be taken, but I hope an opportunity may be found at a not unduly late period of the session. The unrest to which the hon. Member alludes would naturally be discussed on the Budget.

MR. KEIR HARDIE: Will more than one day be given?

MR. ASQUITH: I cannot say.

Facilities for Foreigners.

SIR EDWIN CORNWALL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the difficulties experienced by visitors from other countries in obtaining permits to, and information concerning, national and other public institutions owing to the multiplicity of Government, municipal, and other departments to which they must apply, and having regard to the evident growth of public opinion in the country in favour of making the desire on the part of the British people for international amity more apparent, and the desire that more facilities should be afforded such visitors to get into closer touch with our national life than is possible under the present unorganised arrangements, he will consider the advisability of appointing a Committee to report as to what steps it is desirable to take in the matter.

MR. ASQUITH: I will consider my hon. friend's proposal, but in view of the absence of machinery for carrying out the excellent object which he has in view I am not at the moment very hopeful that I shall be able to give him a satisfactory assurance. I will, however, communicate with him later.

Government Reform Bill.

MR. HUTTON (Yorkshire, W.R., Morley): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he has definitely undertaken, during the discussion of a Government Bill and during the lifetime of the present Parliament, to provide an opportunity to raise the question of women's franchise in a form that would give legislative sanction to the proposal; what means he proposes to take to ascertain whether the proposal has behind it the overwhelming support of the women of the country; what would be the probable numerical effect upon the electoral register if the names of women were added upon a democratic basis; and whether, in view of the fact that there is no precedent for so great a change except upon the responsibility of the Government of the day, and that no active discussion of this proposal has taken place at any general election, he will consider the advisability of deferring the consideration of this question under such circumstances to another Parliament.

MR. ASQUITH: As to the first and last paragraphs of this Question, I must refer my hon. friend to what I said on behalf of the Government to a deputation of my hon. friends last week. In regard to the second paragraph, there is a variety of ways in which opinion may be expressed, and it is not for me to say which of them is likely to be most effectual for the purpose. With regard to the third paragraph, I am not aware that there are any statistical data upon which a trustworthy answer can be founded.

MR. HUTTON: If an Amendment to the proposed Government Bill is carried, will it then become part of the Government's policy in relation to the franchise of the country?

MR. ASQUITH: My hon. friend asks me a contingent question in regard to a remote and speculative future.

Mr. MOORE (Armagh, N.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say where we may find a report of his answer to the deputation?

Mr. ASQUITH: I think I saw a very excellent report in *The Times.*

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Correct by accident.

Lord R. CECIL: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he intends to introduce a measure of electoral reform before the next general election, and, if so, whether it will be introduced in this session or next session; and whether he proposes to give no facilities for the enactment of a Bill conferring the franchise upon women except in connection with a measure of general electoral reform.

Mr. ASQUITH: No such measure will be introduced during the present session, and I am not yet in a position to make any statement with regard to the business of next year. In regard to the latter part of the Question, I must refer the noble Lord to the speech which I made to the deputation last week.

Lord R. CECIL: Will the right hon. Gentleman cause an authorised report of that speech to be circulated?

[No Answer was returned.]

The King's Visit to Russia.

Mr. O'GRADY: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the present relations between the Government of Russia and the members of the first Duma, His Majesty's Government will take steps for the suspension of State visits between the Sovereigns of the two countries.

Mr. ASQUITH: The Emperor of Russia paid the usual official visit to this country after his accession. That visit was never returned, and at the same time the King has not yet paid the official visit which it is customary for Sovereigns to pay after their accession to the Throne, and which the King has already paid to the Sovereigns and Heads of other foreign European States. Moreover, the King and Queen have not had an opportunity of meeting their nephew and niece, the Emperor and Empress of Russia, during the past seven years. There is happily nothing in the present relations between the two countries to render such a visit inopportune. It can have nothing but a good effect upon the dealings of each country with external affairs, and it can have no relation at all to internal affairs in either country nor any effect upon them; and it would be undesirable to make it dependent upon such considerations.

Mr. O'GRADY: Having regard to the fact that, in the eyes of Europe, this country has always stood for representative institutions, is the right hon. Gentleman aware that 100 members of the first Duma and 50 members of the second Duma are either in Siberia or in prisons and chains as common criminals awaiting a trial that may never take place, that official and unofficial murders still go on unchecked in Russia, and that the perpetrators are decorated by the Tsar, and that the people suspected of disaffection towards the Government still mysteriously disappear from among their friends; and, if so, will representations be made to His Majesty that the visit to Reval shall be deprived of its State and representative character?

Mr. ASQUITH: I very much deprecate such statements in regard to the internal condition and policy of a foreign nation, no matter what that nation may be. I have sufficiently indicated what are the grounds and the only grounds upon which this visit is being made.

Mr. O'GRADY: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the visit can be detached from its representative character; and, in view of what is already transpiring in Russia, whether the Government has not a precedent in the fact that we severed our connection with Servia on a matter of minor importance compared with that in the case of Russia?

Mr. ASQUITH: I cannot recognise any analogy between the two cases.

Mr. JOHN WARD: Has the right hon. Gentleman, when deciding this question, taken into consideration one important element — the danger that might arise to the Head of the State?

Mr. ASQUITH: Certainly.

Irish Parliamentary Representation.

Captain CRAIG: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether it is the intention of the Government to include redistribution of seats in the large measure of electoral reform which he has promised to introduce before the expiration of the present Parliament; and, if so, will steps be taken to ensure proper representation for the loyal Unionist minority in Ireland.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): Before the right hon. Gentleman answers that, will he say whether he accepts the statement in the question that the present Unionist representation of Ulster is not proper; and, if so, whether he does not think that the blame attaches to the constituencies which send these hon. Members to Parliament?

Mr. ASQUITH: That is a matter of opinion. In regard to the Question on the Paper, it would be premature at present to give any assurances as to what the measure in question will or will not contain.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): May I ask what Supply will be taken on Thursday?

Mr. ASQUITH said the Government proposed to take, in Committee of Supply on Thursday, Class 5, Vote 2, Colonial Services; Class 3, Vote 9, Reformatory and Industrial Schools; and Class 3, Vote 8, Prisons.

THE KING'S VISIT TO RUSSIA—REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO MOVE ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. O'GRADY, in view of the unsatisfactory reply given by the Prime Minister to his Question in reference to the proposed visit of the King to the Tsar of Russia, asked leave to move the adjournment of the House in order to call attention to a matter of urgent public importance—namely, the action of the Government in advising His Majesty to pay an official visit to His Majesty the Tsar of Russia.

*Mr. SPEAKER: I think the proper opportunity to raise the question—and an early opportunity will arise—will be upon the Motion for the adjournment for the Whitsuntide recess. That will be before the journey takes place, and, therefore, the hon. Member will be in time. I think the rule under which he proposes to act is intended to be for matters so urgent that they cannot be raised at any other time; and if I am correct in that interpretation, I think the hon. Member should raise the question on the Motion for the adjournment for the holidays.

Mr. O'GRADY: May I submit that the preparations will be so far forwarded as to prevent the possibility of changing the character of the visit?

*Mr. SPEAKER: So far as I understand these matters the preparations are complete; the arrangements between the two Governments have been completed. If the hon. Member wishes the arrangements to be altered they can be equally altered next week.

Mr. O'GRADY: May I submit, Mr. Speaker, that if we delay the matter till 4th June it will be impossible to change the character of the visit from a State to a friendly visit, and that there is no opposition to His Majesty taking the visit, provided that it is of a friendly nature—of a private nature.

*Mr. SPEAKER: What I have said, I have said.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: May I point out with great respect that on the Motion for the adjournment for the Whitsuntide holidays a definite separate discussion cannot be raised, because anyone can speak on any matter he chooses, so that that destroys anything like fixing a discussion? Further, these Motions for adjournment are indications of public opinion, and there will be no opportunity of taking a division on this question at any other time.

*MR. SPEAKER: In the one case the hon. Member can vote for the adjournment, and in the other case against it.

SUMMARY JURISDICTION (IRELAND) BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 155.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 155.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee), to be taken into consideration upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 241.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEE).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A. Mr. Attorney-General (in respect of the Coroner's Inquests Bill), and Mr. Secretary Gladstone (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill); and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Solicitor-General (in respect of the Coroners' Inquests Bill), and the Lord Advocate (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Sir Randal Cremer; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Sir William Collins.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

PUBLIC HEALTH (SEWERS AND DRAINS) BILL.

"To amend the Public Health Acts with respect to Sewers and Drains," presented by Mr. Vivian; supported by Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Walters, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Bowles, Sir William Collins, Mr. Waterlow, Sir William Bull, and Viscount Morpeth; to be read a second time upon Monday, 15th June, and to be printed. [Bill 243.]

PAYMENT OF RATES BILL.

"To regulate the Payment of Rates when made by the Owner instead of the Occupier," presented by Mr. James Mason; supported by Sir Gilbert Parker, Viscount Helmsley, Mr. Hicks Beach, Mr. Courthope, Mr. Villiers, Mr. Vivian, and Mr. Molteno; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 244.]

MONEY LENDERS BILL.

"To amend The Money Lenders Act, 1900," presented by Mr. Atherley-Jones; supported by Mr. Cross, Mr. Carr-Gomm, Mr. O'Grady, Mr. Charles Nicholson, Mr. Marnham, Mr. Frederick Edwin Smith, and Mr. Walsh; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 3rd June, and to be printed. [Bill 245.]

GOVERNMENT OF SCOTLAND.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.), in asking leave to introduce a Bill to amend the provisions for the future government of Scotland, said he would offer no apology for introducing a measure of that sort to the notice of the House, for the scant opportunities which any Scottish Member and the people of Scotland got, in his opinion, justified Scottish Members in taking every opportunity to put their case before the House and the country. If that was not sufficient justification, he thought the recent action regarding Scottish measures in another place would be quite sufficient. He merely wished to expose the actual situation as regarded Scotland in all moderation, and to ask the House, in a sense of fair play and justice, whether they thought they had been fairly treated. He would take the three leading social questions.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) said he understood the hon. Member was rising under what was commonly called the ten minutes rule to explain the provisions of a Bill, but he gathered that instead of doing that he was going through

Mr. Swift MacNeill.

the various questions on which he thought his countrymen had not been properly treated. He asked if that was in order under the Standing Orders.

*MR. SPEAKER: The Standing Order lays down that a brief explanatory statement may be made explaining the provisions of a Bill, and I think the hon. Member should confine himself to that as much as possible.

MR. PIRIE said that that was his intention, but beforehand he thought he was justified in showing up the necessity for such a measure.

*MR. SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. Member that by custom his time is very short.

MR. PIRIE, continuing, said he intended to be brief He was dealing with the three social questions of education, land, and temperance, which were a sufficient proof of the necessity of the measure in Scotland. He claimed as a Scottish Member his right to expose the treatment meted out by the House to Scottish questions. As regarded Scottish Estimates, it was not denied by the late Prime Minister that on an average for the last ten years they had only had six hours per annum. As regarded the formation of the Scottish Standing Committee, he would point out that that Committee was passed *sub silentio* by the House. He would now come to the Bill. The Bill was merely to give effect to a Resolution which had already been passed by the House in 1894, moved by the hon. Member for Kincardine, and seconded by the present Chief Secretary for Ireland. That Resolution, favouring Home Rule for Scotland, and declaring the necessity for the establishment of a Scottish Legislature, was passed by a large majority in the House. The main purposes of the Bill were to devolve upon a legislative body in Scotland power to make laws on matters exclusively relating to Scotland. It specifically enumerated those measures, and no power was given to legislate on any other measures. The executive power continued with the Crown, and it was proposed to revive the old Scottish Privy Council, so that an executive committee might advise His Majesty as to what was most required for the government of Scotland. Power was also given to impose taxes, except duties of Customs and Excise. Arrangements were made for a proper adjustment of financial relations between Scotland and the Imperial Parliament. He wished to emphasise the fact that every provision of the Bill was subordinate or subject to the paramount control of the Imperial Parliament. He was only carrying on work begun by his predecessor, the late Dr. Hunter, a name which all who were familiar with Scottish questions would always cherish. He introduced a Bill much the same as the present one in 1892, and on the back of that Bill was the name of the present Lord Chancellor, that of the present Under-Secretary of State for India, and that of the late Financial Secretary to the Admiralty. This was not the first Bill he himself had introduced, for in 1899 he introduced a similar measure, and it might interest the House to know that on the back of that Bill were the names of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, the present Secretary for Ireland, the present Lord Advocate, and Lord Justice Fletcher Moulton, who was no longer in the House. He would not dwell on the example of other countries beyond mentioning that in the United States of America they had no less than fifty-three State Parliaments, under one central body, and it was important to remember the sub-division of labour that prevailed in every civilised country. At the present moment this House acted as a millstone to Scottish national development, and that they must safeguard their dearest birthright was the reason for his introduction of this measure.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to amend the provisions for the future Government of Scotland."—(*Mr. Pirie.*)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. and gallant Gentleman has had an opportunity, a brief opportunity, under our Standing Orders, but still an opportunity, of explaining what the Bill is which he introduces to the House. Instead of availing himself of that opportunity he has indicated various grievances under which he thinks Scotland is suffering, and he has occupied his time in enumerating various members of the Government and others who, he tells us, have in times past made themselves responsible for the unknown provisions of the measure which he is now asking the House to accept. I put it to any gentleman who has listened to the hon. and gallant Member whether he has the slightest conception of what are to be the duties of the Committee of the Privy Council of Scotland, which is to advise His Majesty; what is to happen if the advice of that Committee differs from the advice given by the King's advisers responsible to this House; whether he has given to the House the smallest conception of whether Scotland is to retain a number of representatives in the House for dealing with matters purely English, whilst a number of matters purely Scottish are withdrawn from this House; and how he thinks it would be fair to the Party to which he belongs if in the reversals of fate the majority should be somewhat reduced and it was left entirely to English Members to vote upon English Education Bills and English Licensing Bills. He has not explained to the House either what is to be the relation between the Treasury and the Scottish Parliament, which is apparently to have unlimited power of putting on direct taxation presumably in addition to the very great taxation put on by the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, or whether this House is to continue to discuss Scottish Estimates in so far as they depend upon money raised in other parts of the United Kingdom than Scotland. If that is the provision of the Bill I should like to know how his grievance with regard to the discussion of Scottish Estimates in this House is likely to be remedied by the measure, of which I will not say he has given an account to the House, but of which he has indicated certain objects which he hopes it will accomplish.

MR. PIRIE: If you will allow the Bill to be printed, that is all I ask for.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. and gallant Gentleman could have had his Bill printed had he been content to follow the ordinary course permitted to private Members, and it could then have been read a first time—there would have been no challenge, and we should have been acquainted in authentic form with the measure which he proposes instead of having to take a decision upon the strangely inadequate sketch with which he has been good enough to favour us. I am not as a rule in favour of dividing against First Readings; I do not think it is a good general practice, and private Members can always avoid it if they choose to take advantage of the privileges which our Standing Orders now confer. If the hon. and gallant Gentleman insists upon asking the House to read a first time a scheme so crude that apparently its own author cannot explain it to the House—[Cries of "Oh, oh!"]—or will not explain it to the House, then I am bound to say, so far as I am concerned, I cannot permit any proposal to destroy the authority of this House, to do one of two things, either to exclude Scottish Members from this House or to leave them in a commanding position with regard to purely English legislation—I cannot allow a scheme of that kind to pass unchallenged, and if nobody else goes into the division lobby against it I will.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 257; Noes, 102. (Division List No. 150.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Ambrose, Robert
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt. Hn. Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Bell, Richard
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo)
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell, Sir J H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Bottomley, Horatio
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Branch, James

Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J. F. L.(Lancs.,Leigh)
Brunner,Rt HnSirJ.T(Cheshire
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Flynn, James Christopher
Foster, Rt. Hon. Sir Walter
Fullerton, Hugh
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon,Rt Hn SirW.Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt,Rt.Hn.L.(Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Hart-Davies, T.
Harvey,W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W.Bateman(Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kennedy, Vincent Paul
Kilbride, Denis
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamont, Norman
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E)
Leese,Sir Joseph F.(Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S
MacVeigh Charles(Donegal, E.
M'Callum John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Massie, J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Molteno, Percy Alport
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen)
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
MurrayCapt.Hn A C.(Kincard)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow,W.)
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
O'Dowd, John
O'Grady, J.
O'Kelly, James(Roscommon,N
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Partington, Oswald
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Reddy, M.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Rendall Athelstan
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A.Lyulph(Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan,E.)
Thorne, G. R.(Wolverhampton
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philps
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, Sir George (Norfolk)

White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whiteley, Rt.Hn.G.(York,W.R
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Wilkie, Alexander
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wood, T. M‘Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Pirie and Mr. Eugene Wason.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Anstruther-Gray, Major
Arnold-Forster, Rt.Hn.Hugh O
Ashley, W. W.
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour,Rt.Hn.A.J.(CityLond)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Baring,Capt.Hn G.(Winchester
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry,N.)
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Campbell, Rt. Hon. J. H. M.
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain,Rt.HnJ.A.(Worc.
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Cory, Sir Clifford John
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Fetherstonhaugh, Godfrey
Gardner, Ernest
Gordon, J.
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hope, James Fitzalan(Sheffield
Hunt, Rowland
Kennaway, Rt. Hn.Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Long, Col.Charles W.(Evesham
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lupton, Arnold
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M‘Arthur, Charles
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore,John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Moore, William
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Napier, T. B.
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Raphael, Herbert H.
Ratcliff, Major R. F.
Renton, Leslie
Roberts, S. (Sheffield,Ecclesall)
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Sandys, Lieut.-Col, Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Sheffield,Sir Berkeley GeorgeD.
Starkey, John R.
Talbot, Rt.Hn.J.G.(Oxf'd Univ
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Whitbread, Howard
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York,E.R.)
Winterton, Earl
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. BStuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Lord Balcarres.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Pirie, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Gulland, Mr. Robert Harcourt, Mr. Lamont, Mr. Murray Macdonald, Captain Murray, Mr. Ponsonby, Mr. Charles Price, Mr. Sutherland, Mr. Eugene Wason, and Mr. Wilkie.

GOVERNMENT OF SCOTLAND BILL.

"To amend the provisions for the future Government of Scotland," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 246.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (REPORTS OF MONEY COMMITTEES).

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I now beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name on the Notice Paper, namely, "That the Proceedings on the Reports of the Committee of Ways and Means and Committees authorising the expenditure of Public Money, other than the Committee of Supply, may be entered upon at any hour after Eleven o'clock, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)." This is a very old practice of the House, and I think for the five or six years before 1900 it was regularly passed without discussion or division. In 1900 it was again moved by the right hon. Gentleman the present Leader of the Opposition, then the Leader of the House, and passed in the same way. It was opposed for the first time in 1901, and carried on a division after a debate. In 1902 it was not proposed. In 1903 it was proposed again, and carried without a division or a discussion. In 1905 it was carried after a short discussion on a division. The present Parliament has not yet resorted to it. The object is to give facilities to the Report stage of these expenses Resolutions, with which hon. Members are so familiar, and which are now of growing frequence. There are very few Bills which this Government introduces, that is, which fall within the sphere of social reform, which do not involve a Resolution in Committee affecting, whether great or small, a charge upon the Exchequer in connection with the enactment of the measure. Our present machinery in this respect is undoubtedly of the most cumbrous kind possible. I am not complaining of it for the moment; I think everybody desires that it should be simplified and improved. In order to show what a very small curtailment of the opportunities and powers of discussion the passing of this Sessional Order will involve, I may point out that in the case of everyone of these Resolutions, in fact, it is found that there are no less than six possible stages. First of all, there is the Resolution in Committee authorising the expenditure; then there is the Report of the Resolution, which, as proposed by this Order, is capable of being taken after eleven o'clock; thirdly, the Second Reading of the Bill to which the Resolution refers; then the Committee stage of the Bill, the Report stage of the Bill, and the Third Reading; so that no one can say that the effect of re-adopting this which for many years was regarded as part of the settled procedure of the House can be in the slightest degree a curtailment of the opportunities of hon. Members to criticise the financial provisions involved in these measures. It so happens that this year there is an exceptionally large number of such Bills—I think about six or seven, quite apart from the Budget Resolutions. The Budget Resolutions originate in Committee of Ways and Means and there are some six or seven Bills for which the Government are responsible, and as to which it is desirable that this stage should be proceeded with without undue delay. I may give one illustration, and that is the Children Bill, a non-controversial measure which hon. Members in all quarters of the House feel a real anxiety to pass. And there are other and similar measures. I submit to the House that we should revert in this respect to the traditional and convenient procedure, which would to some extent simplify the discussion of these matters, without in any way substantially preventing the House from having full opportunity for discussion. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Proceedings on the Reports of the Committee of Ways and Means and Committees authorising the expenditure of Public Money, other than the Committee of Supply, may be entered upon at any hour after Eleven o'clock, though opposed, and shall not be interrupted under the provisions of the Standing Order (Sittings of the House)."—(*Mr. Asquith.*)

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said the right hon. Gentleman had very rightly given them various precedents for this Motion, but he had omitted, he was sure inadvertently, the most important precedent, that of 1904, when at the request of Mr. Gibson Bowles, backed up by the Party opposite, the Government of which his right hon. friend sitting below him was the Leader, withdrew the Motion. When his right hon. friend brought forward the Motion again in 1905 the whole of the hon. and right hon. Members opposite, supported by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Waterford, went into the lobby against the proposal. The Prime Minister had told them that this proposal did not in any way interfere with the liberty of the House, because there were several stages which would enable them to discuss the financial proposals of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman had also reminded them that prior to 1900 there was no objection to this Resolution. But previous to 1900 the Supply Rule had not come into force; there was not at that time closure at the end of the Session. In 1902 the new Supply Rule came into operation, and at the end of the session Supply was guillotined.

MR. ASQUITH: This Resolution does not affect Supply at all.

SIR F. BANBURY said he was perfectly aware of that. The Resolution affected Resolutions originating in Committee of Ways and Means. Since 1902 there had been a still further curtailment of the powers of private Members by the right hon. Gentleman and his Government. He was referring to the Standing Committees. The right hon. Gentleman had taken the Children Bill as an illustration, and said that if the Resolution were passed the House would have so many opportunities for considering the money Resolution in relation to that Bill. They would have nothing of the sort. The Standing Committee would, but the Standing Committee consisted of seventy Members out of 670, and the only chance that the ordinary Member of the House would have of considering these Resolutions would be sometime after eleven o'clock at night, when the House was empty, when, as happened on the previous night, the vast majority of hon. Members—he did not in any way blame them—were desirous of going home, and when they listened with impatience to a discussion which in any way tended to prolong the hours of sitting. He agreed that the object of the eleven o'clock rule was that the House should rise at eleven. There was no point in that rule if, to suit the convenience of the Government, it was to be continually suspended. This Resolution over-rode the Standing Orders of the House by a Sessional Order. The Standing Orders had been fixed after great consideration and they were very difficult to alter. He did not think that they ought to be altered by a Sessional Order merely to suit the convenience of the Government. In 1904 Mr. Gibson Bowles objected to the Resolution. The hon. and learned Member for Waterford reminded the House how the—

> "Taking of Supply after twelve o'clock in former years led to a great scandal, to the voting of enormous sums of money without discussion, as well as to remarkable scenes in the House. Everybody must agree that it was desirable that all financial business should be taken before midnight—"

—which would mean eleven o'clock now—

> "and he hoped the hon. Member would press his opposition to a division."

The hon. and learned Member was supported by the right hon. Member for West Islington, and the result was that the Motion was, by leave, withdrawn.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): That was because the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury knew perfectly well he had not a majority.

SIR F. BANBURY: Of course, he accepted the statement of the right hon. Gentleman. He had never had a position in the Government, and therefore he was not aware of what went on behind the scenes. He now came to 1905, and what was said on the Motion then? A right hon. Gentleman who was now a Peer, the former Member for Dundee, opposed it very strongly; and the Member for West Islington said the Resolution was a bad one. He very much wished the right hon. Gentleman had been present in order to make his words fit the present Prime Minister, who was doing worse than his right hon. friend, because he had now his Standing Committees, to which all these Bills would be sent. The Prime Minister was depriving a large number of Members of facilities which they had in 1905 and which they had not now. Then the hon. Member for the Kirkcaldy Burghs in 1905 said that—

> "As far as he was concerned, even if he was alone, he would vote against any proposal that the House should sit after twelve o'clock."

That would now mean eleven o'clock. The hon. Gentleman who said that was conveniently absent. Several hon. Members were conveniently absent. Then the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy went on to move an Amendment—

> "After the word 'may' to insert the words 'at least two days notice having been previously publicly given.'"

He thought himself that the present Motion was bad in view of the fact that the opportunities of hon. Members to discuss these Resolutions had been curtailed by the present Government. They had the Standing Committees and they had closure by compartments, which was another very important factor. He supposed, therefore, that it was hopeless to expect that hon. and right hon. Gentlemen when in power would be consistent in carrying out the views they had exressed when in opposition; but he thought it was right that they should have some notice given to them of when these measures were to come on. They all knew that to be in Standing Committee from eleven o'clock, often without an interval for luncheon, put a very great strain on hon. Members, and after having been in the House twelve hours, they were very much disinclined to stay after eleven o'clock. They should be informed beforehand that these measures were coming on so that they might make their arrangements. He would move the Amendment proposed in 1905 by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy—to insert after the word "may," the words, "at least two days notice having been previously publicly given."

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 4, after the word 'may' to insert the words 'at least two days notice having previously been publicly given.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: This is one of the occasions, I think not uncommon occasions, in which the present majority are showing that they are capable of forgetting all their own professions when in Opposition, and of usefully learning from those whom they then denounced. I congratulate them upon their conversion, though it is rather late. At all events, so far as I am concerned, I do not mean in Opposition to express different principles of Parliamentary management from those which I supported when I was responsible Leader of the House. But I would enforce one observation which fell from my hon. friend and colleague behind me and which had reference to the curtailment of the rights of private Members in respect of the Committee stage of almost all Bills, and the much more stringent and brutal application of the Closure by compartments which prevails under the present Government as compared with the last Government. This would give me, if I were so minded, a very plausible excuse for opposing the suggestion of the Government on the present occasion. The procedure in respect of these money Resolutions, in regard to Bills which involve expenditure, is unduly clumsy, and lends itself under the modern system to prolongation and repetition of debate, which is often superfluous and occasionally obstructive. I do not, therefore, propose to oppose the right hon. Gentleman's suggestion. As regards the Amendment that two full days notice should be given, it is quite true that that Amendment was moved from the other side and received a large measure of support, but when I occupied the place which the mover of the original Motion now occupies, I induced the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy to withdraw on my giving a pledge that the Government to the best of their ability would give the House information twenty-four hours before the Motion was brought on that such a procedure was intended. I cannot doubt that the Prime Minister will be prepared to give the House a pledge identical in terms with that which I gave in 1905, and if so, it is possible that my hon. friend may be prepared to withdraw his Amendment. Whether he will or will not follow the further example given by the then Opposition of insisting on dividing against the whole Resolution, of course I do not know. I should rather hope he will not, because in my view these discussions on money Resolutions do very little good, and I certainly think the existing procedure unamended by some such Standing Order as this is unduly prolonged and clumsy. I shall, therefore, support the Government if they give the pledge, although I am bound to repeat that the temptation to resist any further curtailment of our right of discussion of Bills is very great, in view of the enormous inroads upon our right of discussion on the later stage to which the right hon. Gentleman made no reference, but which we all know to our cost form part of the ordinary machinery of Parliamentary government adopted by the present Administration.

MR. ASQUITH: I quite recognise that the right hon. Gentleman had a right and was under a strong temptation to make the dialectical remarks with which he began his speech. Personally, I never took any part in these discussions, but I do not believe any of my hon. friends who did are in any way repentant of the course they then took. No doubt they were actuated by mixed considerations on the peculiar composition and complexity of which it is not at the moment necessary to enlarge. In regard to the Amendment, of course we could not accept it any more than the right hon. Gentleman could have accepted it in 1905, but I am quite ready to give the same assurance that he gave, that to the best of the Government's ability, they will give a day's notice of their intention to resort to this particular proceeding. Of course we must except from that assurance the proceedings of to-night. But in the future it is understood that, as far as the Government can do it—occasions may arise, of course, when it is impossible—we will do what the right hon. Gentleman undertook to do in the year 1905. With that assurance I hope the hon. Baronet will withdraw his Amendment.

SIR F. BANBURY said that under these circumstances, he would consent to withdraw the Amendment, but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would really do his best to give effect to the assurance.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) thought that before they came to a decision on the Motion they ought to know what was the considered view of hon. Gentlemen opposite about its desirability. He understood that the then Opposition in 1905 expressed the view that the Motion was not justifiable. Now the Prime Minister explained that that was only said, as he understood it, in a Pickwickian sense. Did the Government still think it a desirable Motion when they proposed it, and an undesirable Motion when it was proposed by his right hon. friend? After all, their occupancy of the seats on the right of the Chair was not a permanency. Some day they might be on the left of the Chair. In that case, were they going to oppose Motions of this kind, or were they not? The House was entitled to know the genuine view of right hon. Gentlemen as to the desirability of Motions of this kind, and in the absence of such an expression he thought it would be the duty of his hon. friend to divide the House in order to have the votes of hon. Gentlemen opposite as some kind of testimony to their views.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle) hoped the Motion would be divided against. There had been a principle growing up during the time right hon. Gentlemen opposite had had control of the government of the country of introducing a large number of measures involving considerable expense, and they could see for themselves by the Estimates that large sums of money were expended on commissioners and inspectors and others who had been appointed under those Bills. The right hon. Gentleman had told them that ample opportunity was given for discussing the whole of the money that was being spent, but he entirely differed. It might occur that there was only one occasion except after eleven o'clock when the salaries and expenses incurred by these Bills could be discussed, and that was on the Second Reading of the Resolution. If the report stage was taken after eleven o'clock, Members were impatient and wanted to go to bed, and there was not a fair discussion. The right hon. Gentleman said the matter could be discussed when the Bill was in Committee, but that was not the case, because many of these Bills were sent to Committees upstairs, and the greater part of the Members had no power to discuss the provisions. Then, when they got to the Report stage they had Closure by compartments and the Bill was rushed through the House. As regarded the spending of money, he did not believe in legislation which consisted merely in paying sums of money out of the

Exchequer to provide salaries for commissioners and inspectors. It was only on Money Resolutions that they had an opportunity of protesting against public money being squandered simply in providing comfortable berths, and he considered that those Resolutions ought to be kept in the House. If they went to a division he should certainly vote against the Motion.

MR. CROOKS (Woolwich) agreed that they ought not to vote money in a hurry, but he had a lively recollection of what happened in the last Parliament. It was a case of "When the Devil was ill," and the rest of it which everybody knew. Now they were in opposition they were repentant. It was a distinct advantage to have heard both sides of the story. He and his friends were very anxious to get home early, but they had no motor cars, and he had a long way to go. It nearly put him into 6s. 6d. the night before instead of 4d. But he and his colleagues wanted the work of the nation done when men were fresh and capable of doing it. He was once discussing with an eminent lawyer a problem which was difficult to him, and apparently more difficult to the lawyer, who asked how a man's mind could be expected to be clear at four o'clock in the afternoon. As they were all clear in the House they went on till the next afternoon. He had never seen a body of men behave so stupidly as that House could after twelve o'clock at night. He had seen both sides performing, so he knew. Why was it not possible for them to meet when they were fresh and ready for work? Why should the nation's work be postponed till late in the day for the convenience of the legal profession? Why should they not meet at ten in the morning? If he put down a Resolution that, until these money Resolutions were through, the House should meet at eight o'clock in the morning and leave off at eight o'clock in the afternoon, the whole country would be up in arms against the iniquity of interfering with the legal business of the nation. They would have the Judges against it. But that was the way out—to work in the daylight and not in the dark. He was sure some of the speeches which were made after eleven o'clock would never be made if they had a fresh Press Gallery to take down everything that was said. It would be helpful to the nation if they met earlier. He was in favour of the suspension of the Standing Orders, because he saw no other way of getting through the business.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston) said he was not aware of mixed motives which induced Members on the Treasury Bench to vote against a similar Motion some years ago, but he thought they were better than the motives which now actuated them, because it seemed to him that this was just one of those old-fashioned regulations that their ancestors devised to protect the taxpayer. Their ancestors discovered that it was the habit of Kings always to be trying to lay hold of taxpayers' money. It had ceased to be a habit of Kings and had become a habit of Cabinet Ministers. He belonged to a Party which was returned to the House pledged to economy, but since they had come into power they had behaved like a horde of hungry wolves. Scarcely a day passed but some Bill was promoted to lay hold of more of the taxpayers' money, mainly for what had been well described as the appointment of inspectors and other persons who got salaries for trying to restrain people from doing what otherwise they would do, for their advantage and for that of other people as well. At any rate they were constantly faced with a steady increase of expenditure. This was one of the few regulations of the House which made it difficult for the Government to get money, and he conceived it to be the primary duty of every Member of Parliament to prevent the Government getting money.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): I hope before this little discussion closes we shall have some further declaration of the Government's views of the subject than the rather cynical statement vouchsafed us by the Prime Minister. It amounts, as the noble Lord said, to nothing more than this, that when they are in office they have need of this Resolution and will vote for it, and when they are out of office they have no concern with the business of the House or the country, and accordingly, in order to obstruct proceedings of their opponents and the business of the House, they vote against it. I am not very much tempted to undo or recant the vote which I gave when I was in office and to vote against the Motion which I then supported. I am quite ready to support the Government in the course they have taken, on the one condition that they give us a declaration that in their opinion this is a proper course for a Government to take, and that they are not likely to oppose it in future. It is too much to ask that now they are in office they should be consistent with what they said in opposition. All I ask is that when they are next in opposition they should be fairly consistent with what they say now. I am tempted to say a few words more by the speech of the hon. Member for Preston. It is a speech closely resembling many to which I listened from Gentlemen opposite in the last Parliament—the general cry against extravagance or against increased expenditure, which may or may not be justified, but leading up to a conclusion which is not well founded. The conclusion is that every irritating little restriction which tends to spend more time over the grant of a sum of money is a preventive of extravagance and an encouragement to economy. The kind of restriction which is maintained by the necessity for a Resolution of this kind in Ways and Means, and then a report upon it in the House in order to found some minor provisions of a considerable Bill—that kind of use of our time does not serve the interests of economy, and never has prevented the expenditure of any considerable sum, and may have obstructed a useful reform which all parties were desirous of seeing effected. If the object is large the amount of time which you have to spend, and which is very often wasted, over these Resolutions becomes unimportant in comparison with the magnitude of the object you have in view. If you are spending £1,000,000 you can afford to spend an hour before or after eleven o'clock. You do not prevent the expenditure of money by restrictions and inconveniences of this kind, but you occasionally obstruct some reform because a minute fraction of the House opposed to the measure or, like the hon. Members opposite in 1905, actuated by mixed motives, which means a general desire to obstruct the business of the Government, use the opportunity which such a Resolution affords. It is worth while to spend an hour or two every session in discussing this same Resolution, because I do not think the necessity for it is likely to become less; or would it not be worth while for a Government with such a majority to set themselves to work to reform this particular part of our procedure? I am not expressing an opinion adopted for the purpose of this debate. Like my right hon. friend I have always thought that this particular form of procedure was a survival from past times, from circumstances which no longer exist, and was not suited to the case of the present day. I tried to press this upon the attention of the present Government when they were re-modelling the rules of the House, and I suggested that instead of depriving the House of its really substantial business at an important stage it would be much better to save its time by taking away control which is not effective, and at stages which are really of no great consequence. This is one of those stages, and I invite the Prime Minister to say whether the Government will not seriously consider dealing with this question by means of a permanent alteration in our procedure instead of by Sessional Order.

Mr. ASQUITH: I think it would be a very undesirable precedent to set that I should give a pledge of what will happen when we are in opposition. I have never known a responsible Government receive such an invitation, or at any rate, respond to it, and I do not propose to be the first to set an inconvenient and possibly disastrous precedent. This is only a Sessional Order. I do not think any Government has ever proposed to make it a Standing Order, and that seems to indicate that its necessity has always been regarded as more or less dependent on special circumstances, and one ought not to give any absolute pledge as to its applicability at all times and circumstances. With regard to the second and more important point, I have always been of opinion that these Resolutions, which are never put down upon the Paper, of which nobody has any previous knowledge whatever, and which are for the first time read by the clerk at the Table, do not really afford any safeguard against illegitimate or improvident expenditure of public money, and that both the Committee and Report stages of the Resolution are, in the altered condition in which we now live, an absolute and unmeaning form. But I am sorry to say, although I hold that view very strongly, and am glad to find the right hon. Gentleman does, I have a strong suspicion that we should find a considerable measure of hostility to an Amendment of the Standing Orders, and that we should have a prolonged and acrimonious, and perhaps, on the whole, not a very productive, debate, from the point of view of result. But in principle I entirely agree with the right hon. Gentleman, and hope we may come to a general agreement in that sense in all quarters of the House.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) thought that what had fallen from the Prime Minister was not quite accurate in one respect. He had said that this method of putting Motions on the Paper was obsolete. Not very long ago the law officers had brought forward one of these money Resolutions, and on each occasion on which it came up it was productive of this good, that, as it came early in the afternoon's proceedings, full publicity was given, which would not have been the case if the discussion had taken place after eleven o'clock at night. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London brought forward the question of the salaries to be paid to the officials, and it was very noticeable that on each occasion that the question cropped up the Attorney-General announced that the salaries would be less than he had mentioned on the previous occasion, and there was no question in his mind that it was owing to the publicity which was given to the money Resolution in a full House early in the afternoon that the triumph of the hon. Baronet was achieved. The salary in question was to have been £3,000 in the first place. On the next occasion that it came up for discussion the Attorney-General said he hoped it would only be £2,000, and he understood in the end it came down to £1,500. He took it that this Motion had a meaning behind it which had not been explained. From first to last the Irish University Bill had been smuggled and hidden away. They were now prevented from discussing in the House at a convenient hour the financial clauses of the Bill. It was brought in and rushed through Second Reading earlier than was expected and sent to a Committee, and now they were to be deprived of the opportunity of discussing the financial Resolution as they had expected to do. The hon. Baronet had let the Front Bench off very easily when he mentioned the names of some of those who had voted in 1905, when this Resolution, word for word, was suggested by the late Government. The present Lord Chancellor, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Patronage Secretary, the Postmaster General, the Junior Whip, the Minister for Education, the hon. Member representing the Board of Agriculture, the Under-Secretary for the Home Department, our present Ambassador at Washington, and the Home Secretary all voted directly against the Motion, and now, without a word of explanation, without expressing the slightest sorrow at having so soon to eat their words, he supposed being unrepentant, they proposed to vote in favour of it. Seldom had the House seen so humiliating a sight. He quite agreed that it would be impossible for the Prime Minister to bind his followers beyond the continuance of this Parliament. He did not suppose that any member of the present Government would desire to tie their hands to that extent. What struck him was that had this Motion not been proposed there would have been ample time for discussing these financial Resolutions. He did not think that during the present session the right of discussion on financial Resolutions had been abused. Only on one occasion had a discussion been closured, and in that case it would be possible for hon. Members to pursue the subject at a future stage.

Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.) understood the object of the Motion was to prevent the discussion from being closed at eleven o'clock. He would always vote, whenever he had an opportunity, against the artificial restriction of debate. It was for that reason he would vote for the Motion proposed by the Prime Minister. If hon. Members really desired to discuss the Resolutions the clock would not prevent them from doing so. He regarded the suspension of the eleven o'clock rule as really an increase of the liberties of debate. As a matter of fact there need not be less discussion on the Money Resolutions than if a day had been given for their discussion, because they could go on till daylight.

Sir F. BANBURY: May I ask the hon. Member if he has no consideration for our rest?

Mr. BYLES said he wanted to get on with business. There had been a great deal of hindrance of business, and he was sorry to say that there were some unpatriotic spirits in the House who did not seem to be desirous to get on with it.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS [7th May] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:

Tea.

1. "That the Customs duty now charged on tea shall continue to be charged until the first day of July, nineteen hundred and nine, that is to say:—

Tea, the pound - Five pence."

Sugar.

2. "That the Customs duties imposed and the drawbacks allowed under section two of The Finance Act, 1901 (being duties and drawbacks in respect of sugar, molasses, glucose, and saccharin), and the excise duties imposed and the drawbacks allowed on glucose and saccharin under section five of the same Act, and the allowance in respect of molasses used for food for stock under sub-section two of section one of The Revenue Act, 1903, be reduced in each case by fifty-six per cent., or as near thereto as the Treasury may determine, the reduction to take effect on and after the eighteenth day of May, nineteen hundred and eight. Provided that, as respects the duty charged on manufactured or prepared goods under section seven of The Finance Act, 1901, and the drawback allowed on any such goods in respect of which it is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioners of Customs that the duty was paid on the sugar, molasses, glucose, or saccharin used in the manufacture or preparation at the rates now charged; the reduction shall not take effect until the first day of July, nineteen hundred and eight."

Irish Tobacco.

3. "That there shall be charged on and after the first day of January, nineteen hundred and nine, on tobacco grown in Ireland, the following excise duties, namely:—

Upon tobacco, manufactured, namely—

Cavendish or negro head manufactured in bond, the lb.	3s. 10d.

Upon tobacco, unmanufactured, namely—

Tobacco containing 10 lbs. or more of moisture in every 100 lbs. weight thereof, the lb.	2s. 10d.
Tobacco containing less than 10 lbs. of moisture in every 100 lbs. weight thereof, the lb.	3s. 2d.

and there shall be charged, on and after the same date, on a licence to be taken out annually by every person growing, cultivating, or curing tobacco in Ireland, an excise duty of five shillings."

Amendment of Law.

4. "That it is expedient to amend the law relating to the National Debt, Customs, and Inland Revenue."

First Resolution agreed to.

Second Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Mr. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said that if the House passed this

Resolution in its present form without any provision for rebate great hardship would arise in the case of those who held duty-paid stocks of sugar and glucose in the United Kingdom on 8th May, the day following that on which the Resolution was passed in Committee. A very large amount of foreign refined sugar was imported into the United Kingdom from the Continent. That sugar came in this way. It was brought in through bills of lading from Continental ports to inland towns in the United Kingdom and the duty upon it was paid at the port of entry. On 7th May the position was this. There were large stocks of foreign refined sugar which had been brought in and upon which duty had been paid. These stocks had been brought in in the ordinary course of trade, because there was no reason to expect or to hope at that time that the duty on sugar would be reduced. The effect of the announcement made on 7th May was to reduce the value of the stocks to the extent of the reduction in the duty. The foreign refined sugar, as the House was aware, came into competition with the sugar produced in British refineries. That sugar was placed in bond, and the result was that the bonded refined sugar got the benefit at once of the reduction in the duty, whereas the foreign refined sugar could not get the benefit unless a rebate was made, because the duty had already been paid. Orders at once ceased after 7th May. The customers of the various dealers held their hands and said they were not going to pay the duty-paid price when by waiting a week they could get the sugar at the reduced price. The trade was at a complete standstill, and stocks were left on their hands. Unless a rebate was made they would have to bear a loss equivalent to the difference between the old and the new duties. He would respectfully ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to explain why he had departed from almost unbroken precedent. In 1830, 1845, and 1870 rebates were made in regard to the sugar duty. In 1903 rebates were given in connection with the duties on corn and glucose in order that those who had stocks on hand might get the benefit. They all understood that the sugar duty was to fall on the consumer, and not on the importer, and yet in this case very heavy loss was to be thrown on the importer. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would reconsider the matter. The case in regard to glucose was really stronger than that of refined sugar. That article was manufactured in the United Kingdom, and the duty had been paid immediately it was manufactured. On 7th May there was a large manufactured stock of glucose in the United Kingdom on which the duty had been paid, and the effect of the reduction in the duty was at once to lessen the value of these stocks. A large amount of glucose came from the United States and was put in bond, and the English made article had to compete with that which was imported. Therefore, the foreign manufacturers competed with an advantage over the home producers. Here again the manufacturer of glucose was powerless. He could not sell his glucose unless he allowed to the customer the rebate, and that rebate it was surely most reasonable for him to ask the Government to grant, in order that he might get rid of his stock and indemnify himself for the loss which would be thrown upon him. There was one other point. Some weeks before this change was made the sugar refiners and the glucose manufacturers brought this question before the Prime Minister, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer. They wrote him a letter in which they said that if he was going to reduce these sugar duties, would he kindly remember that it would expose them to a very heavy loss unless a rebate was made. The Chancellor of the Exchequer wrote a letter in reply promising that he would give every attention to their complaint and that the utmost care would be taken to avoid any loss falling upon interests they represented in the event of any change being made.

Mr. ASQUITH: Will the hon. Gentleman quote the terms of the letter?

Mr. McARTHUR said that the letter was from the London Wholesale Sugar Dealer's Association, and was dated 27th April of this year. It stated—

> "The object of this letter, however, is to point out that not only does a heavy and continuous loss fall upon them in various ways while the duties exist, but that in regard to

sugar, they would be called upon to suffer severely in the reduction or abolition of the duty (either of which they would rejoice to see), unless their interests were safe-guarded in the transition period. I will endeavour, as briefly as possible, to point out the changes that have occurred in the methods of trading in sugar since the abolition of the duty in 1874.

Up to that period sugar was landed and warehoused only in the larger ports of the kingdom, in all of which bonding facilities existed. On the removal of the duty, however, it immediately became obvious that cheaper methods of distribution could be employed by landing at many smaller outports, or by carrying the sugar on through bills of lading from the continental ports, into inland depôts. By this change a considerable saving was effected in warehousing charges and land carriage, to the direct benefit of consumers generally. When the duty was re-imposed in 1901, this method was maintained, but at considerable sacrifice on the part of the sugar dealers. In many outports and inland towns there are no bonding facilities, and the duty has had to be paid by the dealers on the arrival of the vessel; and a large amount of extra capital has been employed by them, without any return whatsoever.

"In the ordinary course of their business, my members hold large stocks of sugar in these places, the duty on which must of necessity be paid at the port of entry, when and as the goods arrive. In the case of the abolition of, or a reduction in the duty, they would be called upon to suffer a very serious loss, unless the circumstances of their position be taken into account in the Budget proposals. This loss would be so severe as to wipe out the net profit they are able to make in months, and probably indeed even in years of trading. They would (as past experience has conclusively proved in regard to sugar as well as other articles), be compelled by the force of competition to immediately reduce their prices to the extent of the duty remitted, and would in this way be called upon to bear a loss on their stocks in such places where the sugar must of necessity be held duty paid, which loss it is obvious was never intended to fall upon them individually.

"I am instructed to inform you that the matter has had the most earnest and careful consideration, and my members are convinced that there is only one way in which it can be met, viz., by a rebate upon stocks held in public stores or warehouses or railway or steamship depôts, in the event of any change in the direction indicated. The matter is one of the deepest importance to my members, and I beg to urge upon you in the strongest possible terms, to give it your most serious consideration, so that they may be saved from a crushing and altogether undeserved loss.

"I trust most sincerely that you will be good enough to favour me with some assurance that in the event of any change, it will be made immediately operative (so as to avoid any paralysis in the trade), but that a rebate to the extent of the duty previously paid will be granted on sugar waiting for distribution, and lying in the public stores above mentioned. I desire to point out that there are precedents for the action which I am asking you to take, but on no previous occasion has the necessity for it been at all as great."

This is the reply to that letter—

MR. ASQUITH: What is the date?

MR. McARTHUR: It is dated 24th April, 1908—

"I am desired by Mr. Asquith to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant, and to say that the arrangement necessary for mitigating any hardship to traders which might otherwise arise in connection with a repeal of the sugar duty would be a matter which would require very careful consideration, with due regard to the various interests involved, if and when such a change were decided upon.

"Mr. Asquith fears that he cannot at the present time give any pledge as to the particular steps which would be taken in a contingency which has not arisen; but you may rest assured that the interests which you represent equally with the other interests involved, would not fail to receive the anxious attention of any Chancellor of the Exchequer who may be in a position to propose the repeal.

"I am to add that Mr. Asquith has read very carefully the note of the deputation from your and other associations to Sir Thomas Pittar, on the subject of the burden of Customs duties upon the trades concerned with dutiable articles, but that he does not think that he can add anything to the reply which Sir Thomas Pittar gave to them, with which he is in substantial agreement."

He submitted that the Association had a right to rely upon the Government following the precedents set in previous years and that protection would be afforded them.

MR. ASQUITH: I expressly guarded myself against giving any pledge to follow precedents. I said the matter would receive anxious consideration.

MR. McARTHUR said that they invariably found that letters from Government Departments were in the most guarded terms; but the trade, when a serious matter was brought before the Government in the event of a contingency arising, and when that contingency had arisen, relied that consideration would be given to their representations. The merchants had sustained a heavy loss, and unless an equivalent rebate was made according to the amount of duty, they would have to bear that loss. That was very hard on individuals, and in a matter of this kind care should be taken to protect individuals against loss. He could speak from his own personal experience in the past. He had had to bring matters of this kind to the notice of previous Chancellors of the Exchequer, and he came to the conclusion that Budget announcements were in the first instance of a tentative character and that Chancellors of the Exchequer were advised by their staff that they could not tell what the effect of the changes would be until they were considered by commercial men. When commercial men had dealt with the matter they invariably found when they could shew that the effect of the changes would be unfair that the Chancellors of the Exchequer were willing to re-consider the position they had taken up. He hoped that that would be the case in the present instance.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) was understood to say that he supported the representations made by the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division, and the very reasonable request of the sugar dealers. In February of last year a memorial from the trade was presented to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who replied that if at any time he should be in a position to reduce or abolish the sugar duty it would be his policy to secure that as little hardship as possible should be inflicted on the interests of the trader or manufacturer. These words were calculated to excite the expectations to which the hon. Member for the Kirkdale Division had referred. He supposed the excuse was going to be put forward that there had been in fact sufficient bonding accommodation at all the ports, and that requests for bonding accommodation were received and not refused. That answer, although true as regarded part of the trade, was quite irrevelant as regarded the present request, because this particular importation of foreign refined sugar had gone on under circumstances in which bonding accommodation had never been provided. While making these remarks, he wished to thank the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the reduction of the sugar duty. He had pleaded in past years for its remission, as it was a tax on the raw material of an important British industry, and he regretted that he saw so little prospect of the Chancellor being able, without sound financial methods, to give any further remission of the duty.

MR. ASQUITH said he would leave the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reply to the arguments. He would not have intervened but for the suggestion that some language used by him might have given rise to expectations which had not been fulfilled. He would be very sorry if that were the case; but he could not charge himself with having used any expression upon which persons engaged in the industry could found reasonable expectation that, if there were a reduction in the duty, rebate would be allowed. The expression to which reference had been made was that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have a due and anxious regard to the interests of persons engaged in the trade. With the exception of the case of corn and one or two minor cases, there had been no rebate when duties were changed in amount or abolished. The only real exception to the uniform practice during the greater part of the last fifty years was in respect of the corn duty. Since to give a rebate in such cases had been a rare exception granted for special reasons, there was no ground to expect that, if the sugar duty were dealt with in the ordinary way, consideration for the traders would take the form of a rebate. Consideration was shown in the period of notice given. The question of the duration of that notice was open to argument, though he still thought it was a reasonably long notice. In regard to a rebate, he could not acknowledge having given any undertaking.

MR. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich) said it was not a question of breaking faith, it was a question of satisfying the reasonable expectation raised in the minds of the dealers in sugar. He was not in the least speaking against the figures of the Prime Minister, but in this case he wished to ask whether the Government were not dealing rather unfairly with the trade. He would point out what the actual position of the trade was. In the first place, the loss fell not on the consumer, but upon the unfortunate people who held stocks of sugar at the time the duty was taken off. It might be contended that that was a fair trade risk; that when the duty was imposed they got the benefit and when it was taken off they should sustain the loss. But that was not a fair test of fairness for the reason that the people who made the profit were not those who sustained the loss. The whole question was whether the trade were taking a gambling risk, in which case there was nothing further to be said, or whether they were making a loss through no fault of their own, and were entitled to the protection of the Government in the matter. The business of the sugar trade could not be carried on without the dealers carrying large stocks. The importance of this particular case lay in the fact that when the duty was first imposed the importers of sugar made a bargain with the Customs authorities by which the duty was paid at the ship's side when the ship came in. The Customs authorities were thus saved the great expense of supplying bonded stores. If bonded stores had had to be provided the Government would have been put to great expense during the years that this duty had been in force; therefore the Government had been saved a great deal of money by not having to provide the bonded stores. By the nature of the trade it was impossible for those engaged in it to protect themselves. Some of the dealers were afraid of the duty being reduced at this time, and the loss that might accrue, and they applied to the Customs authorities for additional bonding facilities, which were refused. Therefore for the loss which had now fallen upon them the Government, and not they themselves, were responsible. There was this point with regard to the higher question, that even from the point of view of the general trade of the country the course which the right hon. Gentleman now proposed to adopt would be prejudicial in the highest degree to all engaged in the trade. At this time next year and every year that the duty remained in force every exporter in the trade would hold his hand, because they would be afraid of the loss that might accrue. He now came to the pledge given by the Prime Minister. The letter which he held in his hand was much more important than others which had been referred to which were formal. This letter was an answer to a letter which put the exact case which had now arisen, and in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time was asked what action he would take in such a case.

Mr. ASQUITH: What is the date?

Mr. BONAR LAW said the letter was dated 11th February, 1907. It commenced in the usual formal way about the desire of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to meet particular cases, and then came the very point which had now arisen.

Mr. ASQUITH: That was last year.

Mr. BONAR LAW: Does that make any difference?

Mr. ASQUITH: I think it does, a great deal.

Mr. BONAR LAW said the value of it was that the people who got the letter last year had been trading since on the authority which the letter gave them. It continued—

> "I may however say with reference to the hypothetical case which you put to him"—

that was the case which had now arisen—

> "that you may assume it would be his policy as it has been the policy of his predecessors in the Office of the Exchequer to provide for as little hardship," &c., &c.

Mr. ASQUITH: Hear, hear.

Mr. BONAR LAW said that surely the Prime Minister must be acute enough to see what that meant. It undoubtedly meant that he was going to follow the precedent of his predecessors. If the right hon. Gentleman was right in saying that the precedents which he had given were the real precedents, then he had given no pledge, and these gentlemen had no right to complain. But the precedents the right hon. Gentleman put before the House were far from the actual facts of the case. There were two ways in which this difficulty could be overcome. One was by giving a rebate and the other by giving the dealers a longer time for the stocks to be used up. He cared not which the right hon. Gentleman chose, but to adopt neither was to inflict a hardship on the traders of the country. In every other case there had been either a rebate or time given. In case neither was given, it would be impossible for people to get rid of the stocks on which duty had been paid, and if any individual took such an advantage of a fellow-trader he would be accused of very sharp practice. This Government which could afford to do without £4,000,000 of taxation could also afford to be just, and they were bound to give the dealers either a rebate or time to get rid of their stocks. In his opinion the Prime Minister had committed himself to give one or the other, but under this Resolution he had given neither.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth) said he felt bound to support what had fallen from the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. He was one of those who introduced a deputation to the right hon. Gentleman on this matter. It was true he had received a letter from his right hon. friend which was published, in which he regretted his inability to meet the case. He fully understood that one practical difficulty at the present time arose out of certain financial obligations. The hon. Member opposite, however, did not keep sufficiently before the House the fact that this was not a question of raw sugar but of foreign refined surgar, and it was important to note that the proportion of trade in the import to this country of sugar refined abroad and raw sugar showed an increase on the side of the foreign refined sugar. The import of the sugar was larger than that of raw sugar. There was no comparison between the amount of sugar refined in this country and that refined abroad. The trade in the foreign refined sugar was conducted by means of through bills of lading from town to town, the duty was paid at the ship's side, and whatever arrangements the Government had made were not compatible with bonding facilities. He therefore thought that these gentlemen were entitled to consideration. The instance quoted by the right hon. Gentleman only went to show that when people were misled consideration was shown in these cases. He believed the deputation he introduced did not desire an extension of time. Certainly, no adequate time to reduce stocks was given to them. They were only given a matter of ten days, and they felt they could not get an extension of time. What they desired was a rebate. He understood that under the Customs arrangements the British sugar refiners were in a preferential position, a position of marked preference as compared with the importers of sugar refined abroad. This was a free trade Government, and stood for equality of opportunity all round, but a circular had been issued from the Customs this year which enabled the British refiner, if he had duty-paid refined sugar, to put the sugar into bond and use it for export or for ships' stores. With that facility he had an opportunity of getting out of the loss caused by this duty, but no opportunity was given to the importers of foreign refined sugar. If he desired to use it for export or for ships' stores he could not get the drawback, yet the foreign sugar had paid duty exactly in the same way as raw sugar. If it was fair to give this preference to sugar refined in this country, why was it not fair to give it to the importer of foreign refined sugar? He hoped his right hon. friend would deal with that point, because the trade in foreign refined sugar was more important in bulk than the trade in raw sugar. He believed the people engaged in that trade had suffered, and it was impossible to set against the loss they now sustained the profit some other people made six years ago.

MR. SAMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall) was understood to say that, if the Prime Minister's view was correct as to precedents, he ventured to urge him to reverse those precedents. If they led to hardship as they were doing at present, it was time they were altered. He belonged to a constituency where they bought sugar to a very large extent. One firm had bought £50,000 worth and had paid the duty on it. [" Where ? "] In his own constituency. Surely that was a very great hardship. The whole cost of the rebate only involved something like £100,000, and surely the Government when they were raising such a large revenue, should be very careful that in making any alteration no injustice was done to any class of the people.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said he did not know that he could add anything to what had fallen from the Prime Minister. If there was any unfairness at all in the action of the Government it was that they gave a slight advantage to the home producer as against the foreign importer. His hon. friend had pointed out that they made the case a very invidious one if they gave the slightest advantage to the home producer against the importer of foreign produce. They were attacked by the hon. Member for Dulwich for showing even this slight advantage to the home producer. The hon. Gentleman was the champion of the importer of foreign commodities, and he was supported by the hon. Member for Sheffield. The favour to the home producer, if there was any favour at all, was very slight. His hon. friend was wrong in rather exaggerating the extent to which the home producer had been favoured in the matter of exporting during the fortnight allowed by the Budget. It was a very small matter, to meet which it was hardly worth while dislocating the whole of their arrangements. He must complain of the way in which the hon. Member for Dulwich had exaggerated the whole thing. He had talked of its being a calamity and unfair to the trade.

Mr. BONAR LAW: I know of the case of a friend of mine, not by any means a rich man, who will lose £2,000. That to him is a calamity.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said the hon. Member had talked as if it was a calamity to the whole trade. He himself had met some of the chief representatives of the trade, and he asked them the state in which they would be left, and they certainly did not represent anything which could be justly described as a calamity to the trade. One of the best-known importers of foreign sugar in London had told him that he would probably lose about £1,200, and that the imposition of the duty on sugar had caused a loss of £18,000 to his firm during the years it had been on; so that the result was that the firm would benefit to the extent of £3,000 or £4,000 by the withdrawal of half the duty.

Mr. BONAR LAW: It is not the wholesale dealers; they do not benefit at all.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said the instance he had given was that of a wholesale dealer who had lost £18,000 in the course of the five years the duty had been on. But here the trader suffered a temporary loss by the making of a change which brought permanent gain to him and his trade. To talk in the way the hon. Member for Dulwich had talked was really misleading, and perhaps the hon. Gentleman had not taken the trouble to investigate the very elementary facts which bore on the matter. When the sugar duty was imposed, the traders knew perfectly well what was coming. They knew the Government at the time of the war had to impose a duty on some commodity of this kind, and that sugar was about the likeliest to be taken for such a purpose. Every trader throughout the country made up stocks for about three or four months. They had stocks, as hon. Members knew perfectly well, when the change took place, for three or four months, and what was the result? They had the 4s. 2d. per cwt. added to the stocks which they had in hand and which paid no duty, and no doubt they made a very considerable sum by that change. Now came the present change, and a very important change which benefited them as permanent traders. Surely any reduction must benefit the trade, otherwise what was the good of all this debate about the trade in the last few years? It did not lie in the mouths of traders to turn round and say that the change was of no good to them. At any rate they had benefited to the extent of three or four months' supply with 4s. 2d. duty added on; yet they now complained of a calamity because they had given them a fortnight in which to clear out their stocks.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: It is not a fortnight, but ten days including Sunday.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said it was not a very serious thing to the trade, and the advantage which they got in general trading more than compensated for any possible temporary loss which they might sustain. He had made an offer to the traders to strike an account. He had offered that if they brought the money they made when the duty was put on and debited the Exchequer with the amount they would now lose, he would give a rebate if the balance was against them, but that if the balance was in their favour he wanted them to send in their cheques.

MR. BONAR LAW: Did you make that offer to each individual?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he had made that offer to the trade as a whole. In a sense it was made to all the great firms, and practically they were the same firms as were doing business five or six years ago. But really taking the trade as a whole, there was not bound to be any serious loss. But there would be a very serious loss to the Exchequer, because it was not merely the sugar traders who would claim; the same thing applied to manufacturers who used sugar, and there was no limit to the industries affected by the reduction. They could not grant this rebate merely to the trader; they would have to grant it to the manufacturers, and the Exchequer would by-and-bye incur a loss. He did not think, having regard to the precedents read out by the Prime Minister, or to the precedents they had when the duty on sugar was either reduced or abolished, that they could really grant this rebate, for in every one of these cases it would be found that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had refused the rebate.

MR. BONAR LAW: Since 1870.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that surely the precedents since 1870 were quite good enough to justify their action, and the Prime Minister had given the cases which justified their action in this matter. An hon. Member had suggested that there should be an extension of time, and the hon. Member for Dulwich had put that point. But if they had extended the time there would have been a protest from the whole of the trade, and, as a matter of fact, there had been a strong deputation headed by his hon. friend, and another strong deputation from the representatives of the sugar refiners and some sugar dealers, appealing to the Exchequer not to extend the time, because it would dislocate the whole of the industry, that it would hold up sugar, and that there would be no business done in the meantime; in fact, that it would seriously affect and dislocate the whole trade. Under these circumstances he thought he would be justified in asking the House of Commons to come to a decision to give neither a grant of rebate nor an extension of time. It was a purely temporary loss which the trade would sustain and which would be much more than compensated by the permanent benefit which would accrue from the remission of half the duty. The temporary loss did not compare with the permanent gain which accrued to almost all those firms when the duty was first arrived at.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN regretted the decision of the Government, as it was a matter of serious consequence to particular traders, and was also one which seriously affected the future of our fiscal system in the conduct not merely of this particular trade but of all dutiable trades about Budget time of each year. He regretted the decision of the Government on that account, and also the tone of the right hon. Gentleman's speech. He admitted that as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to deal with his predecessor's Budget the circumstances were difficult and might well try the temper of the right hon. Gentleman; but it was to be hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would bring his grievance against the Prime Minister who had left him with such a Budget, and not against those who were sitting on the Opposition side of the House.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I have no grievance.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he also hoped that the right hon. Gentleman would make a little more effort to deal with the points put to him by the hon. Member for Dulwich. He knew of no man in the House who could put his points more clearly or more concisely than his hon. friend. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would show a little more fairness in dealing with his points in future, and a little more consideration for the traders whose interests were committed to his care. They need not be particularly sensitive about traders who took more than the ordinary trade risk. What was his hon. friend's contention? It was that when they made a change for fiscal purposes, and when they made a change in the Customs duties, it was their bounden obligation to do so with as little disturbance and hardship to individuals concerned in the trade as possible. To tell his hon. friend that he was favouring the foreign importer at the expense of the home producer, and to trail the tails of the fiscal coat across the floor of the House, was to divert attention from a serious practical grievance of a great number of traders that was quite unconnected with any fiscal question. He regretted that the Prime Minister had not remained in the House to hear this debate which must turn upon the language he used whilst he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. His hon. friend had quoted passages from the Prime Minister's speech which assured the trader that he would have regard to precedents in this matter, and when the right hon. Gentleman's attention was called to that statement he considered it was sufficient to recite a series of precedents and state that in only one or two cases was any rebate given. That was perfectly true, but it did not settle the question. In every one of the cases where a rebate was not allowed, time was given sufficient for the traders who had duty-paid stocks on hand to dispose of them. The Prime Minister had referred to the reduction in the tea duty in 1905; that was one of his precedents. He was on the point of interrupting the right hon. Gentleman at the time, but he did not think that was courteous, although he should have done so had he thought that he was not going to remain in the House. But that was not a precedent for what was being done now. The change which he himself made when Chancellor of the Exchequer he believed did not come into force for three months, or at any rate it was an unusually long time, because he wanted a portion of the additional revenue in that year. He wanted to get some revenue during that year from the 2d. he was taking off, and at the same time he wanted to give plenty of time to allow for the reduction of stocks. He gave three months, and there was hardly a pound of duty-paid tea in the possession of dealers at the moment when the change of duty took effect. In order to avoid inconvenience, special arrangements were made to have tea in bond, not merely in London, but in many towns in the country, so that on the day the lower duty came into force the stocks might be delivered to the dealers and the ordinary means of supply replaced. He did not say that that was altogether a convenient arrangement, but he did not see how the Prime Minister could claim that he had followed precedent in respect to giving the alternative of time. He was prepared to take it from the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Prime Minister that the inconvenience of allowing time in this case was so great that it would not be a satisfactory solution. What was the Chancellor of the Exchequer's defence? In the first place, that as the owners of stocks gained at the time when the duty was imposed, so the owners of stocks when the duty was reduced might very well bear the loss. He thought that was singularly unjust. It was not true that the same people would lose, or that they would lose to the same extent as they benefited before, and the proportion in which individuals lost would be different from the proportion in which individuals gained when the tax was first imposed. The right hon. Gentleman stated that after all the loss to traders was very small, that they need not concern themselves about it because it was so trifling; and that he could not make this change because it would cause a very serious loss to the Exchequer. Of course, if it was not the Exchequer that bore the loss then it would have to be borne by the individual traders, and if it was such a serious loss to the Exchequer *a fortiori* it must be also a very serious loss to a trade which was much less wealthy than the Exchequer. With regard to the purely trade aspect of the case, the right hon. Gentleman was doubtless perfectly correct when he said that individual traders told him that they would not lose much or that the loss was not very serious to them. He could not help thinking that if the right hon. Gentleman carried his inquiries further, he would find that the loss was most serious and bore the highest proportion in the case of the smallest traders and those least able to bear it.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE was understood to say that the most serious loss would occur in cases where a dealer bought largely in anticipation of a rise in the market.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he did not think the right hon. Gentleman's figures were quite right, but surely they had no right to penalise those traders because they bought in anticipation of a rise in price. It would be a great misfortune if merchants did not do that. They could not always wait to ascertain the world's price before making purchases: that was not business. Even without making very speculative bargains, it was their business to try and anticipate the course of trade, and estimate the world's price as indicated by the world's production. He did not pretend to say how those losses would fall, but he had evidence which went to show that small dealers would be hardly hit. He did not say it would amount to as high a figure as in the case of the bigger men, but in proportion the small dealer would suffer a considerable loss. He wished to reinforce the argument of the hon. Member for Dulwich, to the effect that it was not in the interests of the Exchequer that this loss should be borne by any particular trader; because it would create uncertainty in all the trades affected—in fact uncertainty was created in all trades by taxation. There was always uncertainty when they were expecting any change in taxation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer would remember the years of the war when additional taxes were expected and when it was known each year that additional taxation would have to be imposed; they all remembered during that period the nervousness and disturbance of trade which preceded the close of each financial year and the introduction of the Budget of the next year. Similarly when the time came at the end of the year for some of those taxes to be remitted, there was again a similar anxiety and nervousness, and an inclination on the part of everyone to restrict business and hold back as long as possible in order that they might know what the Chancellor of the Exchequer was going to do. That was most embarrassing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Nobody need be afraid of any taxes being taken off during my time.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that nobody need fear that any taxes will be taken off as long as he was Chancellor of the Exchequer. What he wished to emphasise was that it was in the interests of the Treasury to minimise interference with trade as much as possible, and, by fair treatment when making a change, encourage traders to continue their business as much as possible in the normal course. On that ground and on behalf of the small traders concerned, he pleaded with the Government for a reconsideration of the decision which had been arrived at in this case. He wished to call attention to another precedent which the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not mention, and which he thought was germane to this case, though it related to the imposition and not to the remission of taxation. When Viscount St. Aldwyn as Chancellor of the Exchequer was imposing the coal duty, he well remembered the hon. Member for Durham rising from that side of the House and alluding to the question of treatment of merchants who had entered into contracts to supply coal abroad. He pointed out that they had bought from the collieries and sold the coal to other people at a narrow margin of profit and that by the sudden imposition of the coal tax that very moderate profit would be turned into a loss. Viscount St. Aldwyn saw at once the reasonableness of that contention, and made provision for existing contracts. It cost him something, but he felt, as they felt now, that if there was some loss of revenue incurred, it was better that it should be endured by the Exchequer than that an injustice should be inflicted upon traders carrying on their business in a non-speculative way. He submitted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be wise to reconsider his position upon this matter. It was useless now to ask for time, because the new duty had already come into force, although some of the traders would have been very glad to have got it at first. He would ask the Prime Minister to have the consideration of the sugar duty postponed from the first night in order that this question of which he had just been seized, and which had been raised by the hon. Member for Liverpool, might be discussed. They had had no opportunity of impressing upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer the adoption of an increased time-limit for the disposal of the sugar stocks. Under these circumstances the Government ought not to complain if they were pressed upon this point. He was quite certain that as long as they had any opportunity they would continue to press the case of these traders upon the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) desired strongly to reinforce what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire had said. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could not expect to have it both ways. If he could not give the rebate because it would cost him too much, then he could not contend that it was not going to be a serious blow to certain traders. He agreed that to a trade with a turnover of over £20,000,000, this item was not very serious, but to individual traders it meant a very serious loss, and that was the whole point. He thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer rather confused the issue when he talked about the trade having made profits in the past, and therefore, they ought to place their present losses against past gains. That argument would not convince the individual trader who was being hit by this proposal. Upon this question, however, he was chiefly concerned about the principle. He understood that the right hon. Gentleman admitted the principle that when they were making changes in taxation they ought to try and arrange matters so that they pressed as lightly as possible upon the people affected. The question was whether this end had been achieved in the present case. The facts which had been brought forward showed that there were going to be cases of hardship, and he put it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the sum involved in the way of loss would not be as big as he had made out. He would like to know how the right hon. Gentleman arrived at his estimate of £140,000 to £200,000.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The amount will probably be £300,000.

*MR. McARTHUR said that the sugar refiners placed the sum at between £60,000 and £70,000 on foreign refined sugar, and the glucose merchants estimated it would be £30,000 on glucose, making about £100,000 altogether.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he could not confine the loss to those two trades.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON said that as far as his information went there were 25,000 tons in stock, and that would certainly not represent more than £35,000 or £45,000. He was content to rest the case upon the principle to which he had alluded and which he understood the Government accepted, namely, that when they were making changes in taxation, they should make them as far as possible consistently with justice to individuals. In the present case they were going to inflict upon individuals admitted hardship which might have been avoided if the Government had given a little more time.

SIR F. BANBURY said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken a very superficial view of the question. His defence had been that when the duty was imposed possibly a certain number of people made a profit, but he did not see that that had anything to do with the question before the House. Probably those who had made a profit were not those who were suffering loss now. But it was not a question whether anybody had made a profit or a loss. It was a question of justice. It was not a question whether the Exchequer was going to lose £200,000, £300,000, or £500,000. That was where he thought the right hon. Gentleman had taken a superficial view of the question, and he had been rather encouraged by the hon. Member for East Toxteth, who had entered into a long discussion as to whether or not refined sugar or raw sugar was touched, or whether there was a preference to the home trade. The plain simple question was whether the Government having the ace up their sleeve should take advantage of the trader. The Government knew they were going to reduce the sugar duty. That was the ace up their sleeve. The ordinary person engaged in business could not know it, and it was sharp practice on the part of the Government to take advantage of that knowledge which was not known to the world. He did not advocate any concession to people who had speculated and whose speculation had gone wrong, but when a man had a stock of sugar on his hands in the ordinary way of business and was placed at a disadvantage with other people, the Government should deal fairly and squarely with him. The loss to the Government was really nothing. The right hon. Gentleman said the trade was going to make a large sum of money by the abolition of the duty. So were the Government, because they said they were in such a prosperous position that they could take off £3,200,000. His belief was that they ought not to take it off. When his attention was first drawn to this question he thought that after all the sugar people made a great fuss when the duty was put on and were making a great fuss when it was taken off, but on looking at it more carefully he had come to the conclusion that any man in business would think he had a genuine grievance when he was put to a large loss because the Chancellor of the Exchequer suddenly came forward with this reduction of duty and made no attempt to give a rebate or an extension of time. With trade in its present condition it was not a good thing to discourage traders from entering into a genuine business. The right hon. Gentleman must see that he had not weighed this case as he should have done. He did not believe he wished to deal hardly with anybody in the matter, and he suggested that if anybody could show that in the ordinary course of business he had suffered a loss which he could not have avoided, owing to the reduction of the duty, it would be only fair to allow a rebate. The right hon. Gentleman would add greatly to his prestige if he showed at the outset of his career as Chancellor of the Exchequer that he could see both sides of a question. It would give him great pleasure if he had been instrumental in pointing out to the right hon. Gentleman the error of his ways, and he trusted he had not risen in vain.

MR. RICHARDSON (Nottingham, S.), speaking as one very closely connected with the small shop-keeping class, said they had not suffered and would not suffer the slightest inconvenience. On behalf of this class he thanked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the course he had taken in relation to this matter. He must have been exceedingly well advised by somebody who knew the general trend and habits of the trade. Not only had he made it perfectly easy for the retail trader to reduce the price of sugar by the exact amount of the reduction of duty without any loss, but the time that was given, somewhere in the neighbourhood of fourteen days, corresponded closely with the terms on which sugar was usually bought by the retail trade. One could understand when dealing with the tea trade why the Chancellor of the Exchequer should give two or three months notice, because tea was bought as a rule from the merchants in London on three months' terms, and it was fair to suppose that retailers were likely to have sometimes two or three months' stock. But in the case of the sugar duty retailers would have an opportunity of clearing the whole of his stock before the duty came into operation. He could assure the House that the retail trade had not suffered at all with the exception perhaps of a few dealers who had speculated. He was exceedingly surprised at large manufacturers who had speculated early in the year in refined sugar, crying out and squealing because they had been nipped, because within two months of the Budget refined sugar had gone up 2s., 2s. 3d. and 2s. 6d. a cwt. so that whatever they had lost by the reduction in the duty they had gained by their speculations. As far as the retail trade was concerned in all the large towns and cities there was not two days stock of sugar in the whole of the shops. Great inconvenience was caused when changes were made in the duties on tea and sugar. He hoped the present Chancellor of the Exchequer would prevent the recurrence of the inconvenience which had been caused to merchants by taking off the tax altogether.

*MR. R. DUNCAN (Lanarkshire, Govan) said that whether they liked it or not they were engaged in the House in making precedents. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had admitted that this was an unfortunate incidence of hardship and had admitted that honesty would compel him to make amends, but that he could not afford to be honest. If the manner of the imposition bore hardly on the individual, the Government should have the courage to be honest, even if it should cost a little money.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth) said he was afraid that the answer the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given in this case would be given in regard to other matters. The hardship must fall on somebody, and in this instance it must fall on the large holders who would not be able to sell at a price to recoup themselves. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had admitted that there would be a serious loss to the holders, but declared that his Budget would not allow him to face it. The reason was that such liabilities had been undertaken for next year that the Chancellor would have to search in every quarter for the money required. That was the only argument which the right hon. Gentleman had been able to adduce in support of the course he was now following. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said: "I cannot afford it, and therefore there is no use discussing the matter any more." The same argument was used yesterday, when it was pointed out that a hardship would be suffered by married couples over seventy if they were to receive only 7s. 6d. instead of 10s. a week as old-age pension. Would the purchasers of confectionery get their articles cheaper as the result of the reduction in the sugar duty? Confectionery was bought in such small quantities that it was doubtful whether it would be possible to make a difference in the price. Therefore, he took it that the whole of the profit would be retained by the manufacturers of confectionery. They were told that the reduction in the duty would largely affect the makers of aerated waters. It was impossible to suppose that the public would get any benefit by the reduction in the tax. Hon. Members had received large numbers of circulars urging them to vote for the reduction of the sugar duty. These circulars came not from grocers or the public, but from the large manufacturers who were deeply interested in the matter. Nothing had been done to meet the case of the large holders.

Question put, and agreed to.

Third Resolution read a second time.

*MR. GWYNN (Galway) moved an Amendment reducing the duty on manufactured tobacco from 3s. 10d. to 2s. 10d. the pound. He said that this was a proposal to continue the arrangement which previously existed, whereby the Exchequer allowed tobacco grown in Ireland a rebate of 1s. in the pound. It had been represented in some quarters that the Amendment was of a protectionist character. Of course, in a certain sense it was so, but it was protectionist under very singular circumstances. If any country was entitled to protection, it was one where there had been deliberate destruction of industry. What the Irish representatives now asked was, not that there should be protection for tobacco-growing, but that an industry which was suppressed by law should be built up by law. Tobacco-growing was an agricultural industry which formerly flourished in Ireland. In the seventeenth century tobacco was so successfully grown in Ireland that the Colony of Maryland objected to the competition and threatened to revolt unless the growing of it was forbidden there. In the reign of Charles II. tobacco-growing in Ireland was forbidden in order to prevent Maryland from revolting. In the period when Ireland had a Parliament of her own it was again proposed that Ireland should grow tobacco. At that time England was no longer interested in Maryland, for the Colony had revolted. Grattan's Parliament passed a law enabling tobacco to be grown in Ireland. Then came the Act of Union, and, although tobacco was not specifically mentioned, there was actually a clause which provided that certain cultures which were formerly forbidden should not again be prohibited. No doubt a certain amount of inconvenience was caused to the English Customs owing to the fact that Irish tobacco, on which no duty was imposed in Ireland, was smuggled into England, but the agitation which took place in this country against Ireland having permission to develop this particular industry was an agitation put forward in the interest of the Bristol merchants. When the matter ultimately came up for debate in the House of Commons in 1832 the argument was all based upon the convenience of the Customs and the demoralisation which smuggling would occasion. In fact, one Gentleman said that he would rather see a grant of £250,000 a year given to Ireland than allow the continuance of tobacco-growing in that country. Ireland, however, never got the £250,000 a year and she lost the advantage of the industry. Grattan's son said during the debate that it was a very serious thing to emigrate the Irish peasants because there was no employment for them at a time when they were killing employment in Ireland. In reply to that hon. Members said that they had heard a great deal about the poor Irish peasant, but why should not the House consider the poor English manufacturer? The House considered the English manufacturer and everybody knew that the growing of tobacco in Ireland was then killed. In fact a regiment of Dragoons was sent down to the county of Wexford where the people persisted in growing tobacco in defiance of the law, to tear up the plants by the roots. So matters stood till 1887 when the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a provision in his Budget for an experiment being tried in tobacco growing, and that the duty should not exceed £50 on the produce of an acre. The experiments, however, only began in 1898, and from that time to this there had been continuous and successfu experiments in growing tobacco in Ireland. These experiments had been carried on principally by one man, Colonel Everard, who had consistently proved that any tobacco which was grown in America could be grown in Ireland. The ripening of the tobacco leaf was done under glass and not in the sun, but that gentleman had proved that Sumatra tobacco of the highest class could be grown in the open air in Ireland, while in America it could only be done by an arrangement of screens which cost £80 or £90 per acre to put up. He hoped he would have the support of the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture in Ireland for the development of an industry which might be of the utmost importance to that country. Every agricultural country in Europe encouraged and developed that industry because it employed an enormous amount of labour. Moreover, it gave employment when other employment was slack and it also gave employment to women. But if it was valuable in any sense, it was valuable as a kind of agricultural education, because no man could grow tobacco without skill. The destruction of the industry in Ireland by this House in 1832, for which no adequate compensation had been made, also entailed a loss of agricultural skill on the part of the people. If an ordinary town-bred man, although an excellent workman, was put on to farm work he was not worth much for a long time, and that consideration applied in far greater measure when they came to the culture of tobacco, which was more like market gardening than farm work. Then the leaf had to undergo a processs of cure, and the whole machinery for that did not at present exist in Ireland. In America the curing of the leaf was only done by the farmer in a temporary way, the leaf being sent to the manufacturer who finished the sweating or fermentation. The machinery for that process had been improvised since 1898 in Ireland, and it was recognised that it was necessary to subsidise the industry so as to carry the business over the experimental stage.

If the Government gave a bounty that would be only making a restitution for the loss of the skill and knowledge which existed when the culture was permissible. He did not think that the cultivation at present exceeded 70 acres in one year, and it was carried on at only three or four points. There had not been till now fully skilled labour employed, though it was skilled enough for the cheaper kinds of tobacco. Colonel Everard and others, however, were trying to grow and cure cigar leaf, and that meant a long, difficult technical process. The difficulties the industry had to contend with were not only unskilled labour but the existing prejudice against an unknown article. When hon. Members for Ireland talked of growing tobacco in that country everybody became witty and asked them if they passed the tobacco and the cigars made from it on to their friends. He understood that those gentlemen who had been growing tobacco had their position secured to them under certain limitations, and though they were limited in the amount of their crop they were entitled to the rebate up to 1913. What he claimed was that the industry should be treated all over Ireland as being still in the experimental stage, and he contended that the House was bound, in consideration of what had been done in the past, to encourage it. Up to the present time the total amount of money paid by way of rebate probably did not exceed £5,000. That sum was ridiculous if it was admitted that some kind of reparation was due to Ireland. He submitted to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the question of free trade versus protection did not enter this matter at all. At present the tobacco growers in Ireland had to compete with growers in the West Indies and America, who had inherited skill which had required generations to acquire. Then people were perfectly willing to acquire that skill. If the Government preferred that what he asked for should not be called a rebate, let them call it a grant. That would avoid the accusation of protection; but it was quite evident that the remission of duty was the best way to distribute the assistance required for the industry, as before they could get the rebate they would have to grow a crop, cure it, put it on the market, and find a buyer. He most earnestly urged on the Chancellor of the Exchequer that, considering the history of Ireland and how hard it was to get a strong agricultural life now, he should look with favour on this experiment which, but for the action of the House seventy years ago, might have become a solid, well-established industry. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would make this small concession which would enable those in Ireland who wanted to take advantage of the recent repeal of the Act of 1832 to do so with profit to themselves. It was the kind of industry that was wanted most in Ireland. It was an agricultural industry. It was being taken up in districts where at present there was hardly room for the men to live, and it had given great heart to those who had entered into it. He urged the right hon. Gentleman in the strongest way to consider this matter and give this experiment the full opportunity they asked for it. He believed that if he did the result would make for the good of Ireland. He begged to move.

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.) strongly supported the Amendment moved by his hon. friend. He deplored the absence of the hon. Member for East Clare who was specially interested in tobacco culture in Ireland and was the pioneer in the matter. For his part he could not speak with detailed knowledge. He had smoked Irish-grown tobacco, as had other hon. Members, with satisfaction, and he had seen with interest the manufacturing operations in West Meath. Whatever the official view the Chancellor of the Exchequer might be called upon to take, this proposal should commend itself to the Chief Secretary for Ireland for its influence against cattle-driving. Why were the cattle on the grazing lands in Meath in the possession of Colonel Everard undisturbed? Because his tobacco-growing enterprise was on the point of becoming an established useful industry in Ireland. The Bill passed last year enabled everybody to obtain for 5s. a licence entitling him to grow tobacco. He could not conceive that anybody who knew anything of the actual state of the tobacco-growing industry in Ireland would be able to bring against the Amendment a single argument founded on real knowledge of the subject. The only argument against the Amendment was that it shocked the free-trade principles of the Liberal Government. Well, Ireland had ever been sacrificed to the principles of other people. They suffered from the Unionist Party when in power because they had no principles; they suffered from the Liberal Party when in power because they had too many principles. He asked that on this occasion common sense should be allowed to prevail over economic principles and political economy. As his hon. friend had pointed out, that great apostle of free-trade, John Stuart Mill, would have given a certificate for this industry in Ireland because it was in the experimental stage. This was an infant industry of feeble growth, though of great promise, and this rebate would so encourage it that fresh heart and hope would be given to the people of Meath. He begged to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 5, to leave out '3s. 10d.' and insert '2s. 10d.'"—(*Mr. Gwynn.*)

Question proposed, "That '3s. 10d.' stand part of the said Resolution."

MR LLOYD-GEORGE associated himself with the regret expressed by the hon Member at the absence of the hon. Member for East Clare, though he thought his cause had not suffered in the hands of the two hon. Members who had supported it. The difficulty, as hon. Members must realise, was a practical one. This was, as the hon. Member who moved it had admitted, a protective proposal. The hon. Member was quite frank upon that point and defended it upon that ground; it was, as he said, Government assistance to an industry, and if such assistance was to be given at all, it should be given openly as a subsidy.

*MR. GWYNN: It has been since 1900 in the way of a rebate.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was aware that up to the present indirect assistance had been given in the form of a rebate, and he believed direct assistance had been given by the Board of Agriculture. To the assistance direct and indirect that had been given there was no objection so long as it was assistance to an experiment. But the hon. Member wished support to be given to an infant industry by this proposal, and the danger was that it might be carried beyond the region of experiment, to which extent the Government were willing to continue assistance, and the assistance might be given at the expense of the revenue, at the expense of the general tobacco trade of the country.

*MR. GWYNN asked would not the difficulty to which the right hon. Gentleman referred arise on tobacco grown in Ireland without a Government subsidy? A subsidy would not affect that.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said it would not, because it would not pay the people in Ireland to raise tobacco for the purpose of eluding the revenue unless the difference in duty made it worth their while. If the experiment became a success that would ensue and it would not be possible to prevent it. As the hon. Gentleman said, this proposal was protectionist in its character, and therefore it was quite impossible that it could be accepted by the Government. If they accepted it with regard to tobacco in Ireland he did not see how they could refuse it in the case of hops in Kent.

*MR. GWYNN: Was the other ever prohibited by law?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that both cases were on the same ground. The other case put by the right hon. Gentleman was probably a better case than the one he had quoted: that was the cultivation of beet sugar in this country. It had been suggested that special terms should be given to an industry of that kind. The support which the hon. Gentleman would get from hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House was an indication of the real peril of accepting an Amendment of this kind. The support he would get was not to encourage the growth of tobacco in Ireland, but really because this would be a concession of the principle for which they were fighting. If they accepted the hon. Member's Amendment what would be said was: "You are willing to protect the growers of tobacco in Meath, but you will not protect the hop growers in Kent, and the wheat growers in Lincolnshire," and he must say that it would be very difficult to resist arguments of that kind put on English, Scottish and Welsh platforms. That was the real position. Under these conditions he was afraid that it was absolutely impossible for a free trade Government to accept an Amendment couched in these terms, and supported by such arguments, and no other arguments were possible. Therefore he must take issue on that point. It was of very great importance. Once they began to protect one industry in this way he did not see how it would be possible to defend themselves against the appeals that would be made to protect other industries in other parts of the country, which might for the time being be rather hard pressed, and which might be even in distress for the moment. He deeply regretted that it was not possible for him to do more to assist an industry of this kind, which appeared to be a very promising one. The hon. Member had spoken very enthusiastically about the quality of the tobacco. He was not in a position to say anything about it either one way or the other. He had never experimented with it or gone into its peculiar qualities.

Mr. KETTLE: Will the right hon. Gentleman wait till he has received a sample of Irish tobacco before making up his mind?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said that that might have a disastrous effect upon his views, and he would recommend the hon. Member not to rely on arguments of that kind, which might rather tell against him. But he heard that the experiment was a considerable success, and knew that the tobacco was warmly esteemed. As far as the experiment was concerned they were quite willing that it should proceed so long as it was purely an experiment. It only extended to about 100 acres which were now under cultivation in Ireland. Once it went beyond that, and it was attempted to make an exception in favour of tobacco growing, then he said frankly that it was impossible for them to accept it.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he had never expected that there would be sympathy in a practical form for this proposal, and he thought that it was clear, from the position which the Government had taken up on the general question, that it would be too embarrassing for them to make any exception in favour of Irish tobacco. But he confessed that he did not think that the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman was quite right. He did not follow his argument. The ground on which the mover of the Amendment asked for its acceptance would lead to no risks to the revenue which were not caused by the mere growing of tobacco. There he was in entire accord with the mover of the Amendment. There were risks to revenue if tobacco was grown in the United Kingdom, but those risks the House of Commons had consented to run in the case of Ireland and in the case of Scotland, and having consented he did not see how the risks would be in any degree aggravated by granting the rebate duty for which the Amendment asked. He was not surprised at the attitude which the Government had taken up on the question. He did not want to turn the debate into a tariff reform discussion and reopen the whole of the topics which they had discussed at other times and which, no doubt, they would discuss again in the future. He thought it was possible even from the free trade point of view to defend and justify the request which the hon. Member had made. There was a famous sentence of Mill to justify the protection of an infant industry in order to give it a start and enable it to take root. And if there ever was a case in which the trader might consider himself justified and in which an orthodox free trader might think it advisable to grant protection to a nascent industry, surely it was in such a case as that of tobacco-growing in Ireland, or the growing of sugar beet in this country and in Ireland as well. The hon. Member had made a special claim for Ireland on the ground that this industry had in fact taken root in Ireland, though it was prohibited by law. He thought that the industry had taken root under a system of protection and not under a system of free trade.

Mr. GWYNN: I think that the right hon. Gentleman is wrong there. There was practically free trade at the time of the Union.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said there was free trade in England, but he did not think that we were growing tobacco here. He did not think that the competition was with English tobacco but with foreign and colonial-grown tobacco. The hon. Member's point was that the growing of tobacco had been prohibited and stopped by an Act of that Legislature for revenue reasons, although the industry was already established, and that, therefore, there was a special claim on behalf of that industry to tender and sympathetic treatment. Now Irishmen were attempting to reintroduce the industry, and that was a claim which did not apply to the growing of sugar beet. He looked at it from a broader point of view. He did not think that there was a man in that House, whatever his fiscal views or whatever his party complexion, who could view without regret and anxiety the state of the agricultural industry generally, or that which they were constantly lamenting in their debates, the flow of labour from the country districts to the towns. How were they to prevent it? Surely the best way was by encouraging some agricultural industry which required a great deal of labour, and the growing of sugar beet and of tobacco were both good for the land and employed a great deal of labour. These industries would cause a demand for labour at a time when agricultural labourers were slack. There was, therefore, not only the advantage of the additional labour afforded, but there was the benefit that the labour would be wanted at times when there was the least demand for labour in other directions. He believed that there would be a great field for sugar beet both in England and in Ireland, and in regard to the hon. Member's claim in respect of the growing of tobacco, that once it was fairly established it might be able to hold its own without any protection or preference whatever. If this country adopted a perferential system, and could give a preference to such goods when coming from the Colonies, then they could apply the same preference to all produce of the same kind. But putting that on one side, here was a case where, without overstepping the bounds laid down by the most orthodox economist, they really could assist a new agricultural industry of a most valuable and desirable kind. Surely it was economic pedantry carried to the extreme limit, to refuse the Amendment on the ground that it was protection, and at the same time to say that it was legitimate to give the same encouragement in the form of a bounty or State grant. If the Chief Secretary or the President of the Board of Agriculture paid the duty, or a portion of the duty, on behalf of the cultivator, the Chancellor of the Exchequer thought that was a reasonable thing to do. Surely to grant a rebate at once was no more heterodox from the political point of view, and it was a much simpler process, and he confessed that he thought that it ought to be done. He was struck with one other observation of the hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment. It was quite true that in order to establish this industry they needed skilled labour. It was very difficult to obtain that skilled labour among those who came new to the industry. They had to acquire that skill which was inherited and handed down from generation to generation in those places where the industry had been long practised. It was a really satisfactory experiment that in two or three places in Ireland something less than 100 acres of land should have been employed, and was it fair, if they were going to continue the rebate for another five or six years to these people, to refuse the same treatment to other people who were making a similar experiment? The rebate was first given by the late Mr. Ritchie, whose political economy was unimpeachable from the point of view of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite. It was his own fortune when Chancellor of the Exchequer to sanction its continunace for a longer period, but if it was to go on as long as the hon. Member said, he thought the present Government must have given a yet further extension. If those who had established this industry had received this rebate already, and also a grant from the Irish Board of Agriculture, or from Irish funds, surely it was only fair that others who were embarking on the same business should receive the same encouragement, at least for the remainder of the period during which the rebate lasted. He had striven to put the case without attempting to conceal his fiscal views which it would be too late in the day to do. He had put the case for this particular demand in such a way as not to make it more difficult for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to deal favourably with it.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.) said they were very glad the right hon. Gentleman could support them in this demand. He was sure everyone must have recognised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had very carefully left out of view the main contention of both his hon. friends that this was not a pure protectionist plea. Their claim was that by the Act of 1833 Parliament had deliberately put an end to an Irish industry and ought in justice to make an act of reparation. It would be entirely different if they were taking up the case, say, of the woollen industry. It was true that in centuries gone by when the English woollen manufacturers found themselves faced with Irish competition they did all they could to stop it, but in spite of those efforts the Irish industry had survived, and was in a very flourishing condition. While they asked for some such measure as this as an act of justice they could not help recognising that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in a rather difficult position, and they would be quite satisfied, seeing that he was not prepared to give them this rebate, if he would adopt the practical suggestion that had been made that something should be done to help the Department of Agriculture to extend services which it already had given towards this experiment in growing tobacco in Ireland, and if before the debate closed the Chief Secretary or the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture would give some promise to that effect, his hon. friends, he was sure, would not press the Amendment to a division. He would particularly urge upon the right hon. Gentleman that it was reparation they were seeking and that what had been done during the past seven years in enabling the experiment to be carried out should be continued for a few years longer. In the case of such an industry, requiring long technical training, if it was to take root in other parts of the country they must allow a certain time to elapse before skilled hands would be able to carry it on in the future.

Mr. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.) said that he and his colleagues had watched this experiment in the South of Ireland with great interest, regretting that in the North their soil did not enable them to follow the example set by public-spirited agriculturists. He had listened with regret to the narrow view which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had taken of the question. However much he might be a protectionist, he refused to see any danger of protection in the very modest proposal made by the mover of the Amendment. They hoped the day would come when there might be a danger to the revenue from the development of the tobacco industry in Ireland, but he would be sorry to think there was any fear of that danger for a few years more. Progress must be slow in cultivating such a delicate plant. He had the utmost pleasure in supporting the Amendment and hoped the House would accept his word that he did not do so on protectionist grounds. He did not think the mover of the Amendment was quite justified in claiming so fully that it was a protectionist Amendment. He would prefer to call it a fostering proposition to encourage this industry which could only succeed with some help. The Agriculture Department, by the bounty they had given to it, had added greatly to the success of the experiment. He should not complain if the Chancellor of the Exchequer promised to get over the Amendment by increasing the bounty which had previously been given. He was absolutely sincere in his desire to see the industry cultivated and fostered in the different parts in which it had taken root, and he had only risen to assure the Chancellor of the Exchequer that in Ireland, whatever their differences of opinion on other subjects might be, there was no difference on this.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said he was glad it was recognised quite sincerely that the Amendment was of so protectionist a character that it would be quite impossible for him to accept it. But he had expressed himself very clearly that the Government had already rendered direct assistance to the Agricultural Department for the development of the experiment. He had not had an opportunity of consulting the Vice-President of the Agricultural Department, but he would promise to go into the matter very carefully. He quite agreed that encouragement could very well be extended to an experiment of this kind without infringing the most rigid principles of free trade; but he did not quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman that that might be extended to other purely experimental stages that had been made in this country. He could not add more at present.

Mr. GWYNN said he would like the right hon. Gentleman to admit a little more fully that they were making a claim of right in this matter, and not merely claiming indulgence for an experiment, but in view of what he had said he would not press the Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution agreed to.

Fourth Resolution agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS [25th MAY] REPORT.

Resolution reported:

INCOME-TAX.

"That Income-tax shall be charged for the year beginning the sixth day of April, nineteen hundred and eight, at the rate of one shilling in the pound."

Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by the Chairman of Ways and Means, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Hobhouse.

FINANCE BILL.

"To grant certain Duties of Customs and Inland Revenue, to alter other Duties, and to amend the Law relating to Customs and Inland Revenue and the National Debt, and to make other provisions for the financial arrangements of the year," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time to-morrow and to be printed. [Bill 247.]

LOCAL TAXATION, NATIONAL DEBT, AND ASSESSORS [PAYMENTS].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "1. That it is expedient that the power to levy the duties on certain local taxation licences in England and Wales should be transferred to county councils, and that Section 17 of The Finance Act, 1907, should not apply to such duties, and that an annual sum be paid out of the Consolidated Fund to the local taxation account to be distributed amongst the county councils in England and Wales in connection with the transfer.—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) thought they might ask some explanation in regard to this Resolution. It was a very important change in their financial arrangements. It carried out a pledge which he thought was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last year, and it was a matter in which county Members especially took a very great interest.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said it was explained fully by the Prime Minister in his Budget speech and was really part of the arrangements in regard to old-age pensions. In order to liberate the Excise officers for the purpose of administering the pension fund it was found desirable that the collection of the duties should be transferred to the county councils for a consideration. These were sums which belonged to them. Although collected by Imperial officers they were transferred afterwards to the county councils and for all practical purposes they were local money. The Prime Minister proposed that the collection of these local duties should be transferred to the county councils themselves, and an allowance was made to them for the collection. It would benefit them financially.

Mr. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) asked if this was not a return to the system which the present Prime Minister sought to abolish last year. He understood that he had in the Finance Act of last year enacted that the duties instead of being paid to the county council were to be paid in future direct to the Imperial Exchequer and then transferred by them to the county council. He understood that the right hon. Gentleman proposed to re-enact the system which existed before, and make the county council collect the taxes which were paid to them under the present system out of the Imperial Exchequer. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would give them a further explanation of this point, because it appeared to him to be a rather serious matter for the local authorities and the country. At the present time an Excise officer was collecting these taxes; next year this officer was to have some of his duties taken away and transferred to the county council, and as recompense the excise officer was to have the pleasure of carrying out the provisions of the Old-age Pensions Bill. Therefore, the county councils were going to have the duty forced upon them of providing somebody else to collect these taxes and they were to be paid a sum of £40,000 for the purpose of enabling them to collect duties formerly collected by Excise officers. That seemed to him a very unsatisfactory way of collecting the excise duties of the country, and he could not see what the object of making this change was or what would be gained by it.

Lord R. CECIL asked why it was necessary to take the Resolution that evening, because it occurred to him that it did not refer to the Finance Bill but to the old-age pensions scheme. If it did affect the Finance Bill, evidently it should be put off until to-morrow. If it related to the Old-age Pensions Bill it was quite a different matter.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said that the Resolution affected the Finance Bill and not the old-age pension scheme. It was intended to liberate the excise officers for the purposes of the old-age pension fund, but it had nothing to do with the scheme. It was more convenient also that the local authorities should collect gun, carriage, dog, and armorial bearing licences. The officers of the local authorities could collect these taxes more easily than the Excise officers, because they were on the spot and it would pay them to do it; and the Exchequer consequently made an allowance to the local authorities for their collection. Thus the Resolution would be embodied in the Finance Bill.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) said the right hon. Gentleman had not answered the question put to him by the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone. His question was what was the necessity for having this Resolution passed before they had got the Finance Bill? Until they had seen the Bill upon which this Resolution was founded they did not know exactly what was intended except through the explanation of the right hon. Gentleman. He thought the best course would be to put off the consideration of this Resolution until they had discussed the Finance Bill, and then they would be able to see clearly what they were being asked to do.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said there was a good deal in what his hon. friend had said. This Resolution dealt with a matter which the Prime Minister mentioned in his Budget speech, and there was a good deal of doubt as to what it actually was that the right hon. Gentleman proposed. The right hon. Gentleman said that the local authorities had better opportunities and more officials for the collection of these duties than the Imperial Government, but certainly the Prime Minister, in suggesting the change, did not base it upon that ground. He put it on the ground that he wished to set free the Excise officers so that they could become the administrators of the new scheme of old-age pensions. He did not think that this was a convenient opportunity to discuss the proposal, and they ought to know exactly what was intended. If the Government insisted upon taking this Resolution now they must ask for a little more information. He did not think the Excise officer was a good person to employ for administering the new pension scheme, because it was something entirely outside his present function, and he was the last man one would think of associating with old-age pensions and inquiring into the qualifications of the particular individuals who were to receive them. It was difficult to deal with this question before they were in receipt of the Report of the Poor Law Commissioners, because it was generally expected that they would recommend very considerable changes which if adopted might provide some other official far better qualified to administer the new pension scheme than the Excise officer. If that were so it was a reason for not hastily making this change.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: There is nothing about the pension scheme in this Resolution.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that the object of this Resolution as explained by the Prime Minister was to set free the Excise officer to administer the pension scheme.

THE DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN: That does not come under the Resolution before the Committee.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said the ruling which had just been given showed that when a question was put from the Chair they might be at once confined by the rules to discussing, not the real issue, but a subsidiary and a side issue. He would like to know if the handing over to the local authorities of the collection of these duties in any way affected the change which the Prime Minister effected last year when he took these duties from the local authorities and paid them an equivalent sum in lieu of them.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman as to the inconvenience of discussing formal Resolutions. They did not afford the best opportunities for discussion, and they were purely formal and very inconvenient. All this Resolution did practically was to enable him to bring in the Bill, and he could not proceed with the Finance Bill unless he had this formal Resolution. He suggested that the best time to discuss the merits of the proposal to liberate these officers from the duties imposed upon them and to consider whether they were the best agents for the purpose would be when the Old-Age Pension Bill was under consideration. The second point was whether it was desirable to transfer the collection of these duties to the local authorities at all. He agreed that that was a debateable point, but it struck him that that was not the best opportunity for discussing either that or the other question. He hoped, therefore, they might be allowed to get through this part of the business with a view to getting a discussion on the two questions he had referred to, and which he did not want to prejudge. The right hon. Gentleman opposite had had very considerable experience in these matters, and he must know how important it was to get formal Resolutions out of the way before they proceeded to deal with the substance of the proposals.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he did not wish to do anything antagonistic after the appeal which the right hon. Gentleman had just made. He had expressed the opinion earlier, that this was a stage which might well be abolished in their Parliamentary procedure. At the same time as long as the Government of the day did not take steps to abolish it, the right hon. Gentleman must not complain if hon. Members took advantage of the opportunity to discuss the Resolution. He would like an answer to the question whether this Resolution made any alteration of the arrangement made by the Prime Minister in his Budget last year.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: No, it makes no change.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said he did not understand why this money Resolution was essential to the introduction of the Finance Bill. He supposed that he must accept the right hon. Gentleman's statement that it was so. It was very unfortunate that the House should be asked to take the Committee stage of a Resolution dealing with proposals which they had never considered at all. He asked the House to consider what the position would be. The Prime Minister last year, in changing the system under which these local licences were paid——

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): There is no change.

MR. COURTHOPE said the Prime Minister stated last year that if he saw fit to raise the duties in respect of any of the licences the benefit of the increase would go to the Imperial Exchequer, and not to the local authority. Assuming that that suggestion would be carried out next year, or at some other time, and that the licence duties on motor cars would be raised, what would the position be? The officials who were paid by the local authority would be collecting the duties, not for the local authority but for the Imperial Exchequer. The local authority would not get any advantage from the increase in the duties. Surely that would be an even greater anomaly than the system which had prevailed up to last year when the duties were collected Imperially and handed over to the local authority. He did not think that the Financial Secretary to the Treasury was justified in saying that there was no change. While there had not been a change in the duties, the amount actually received by the local authority had changed. Now the Chancellor of the Exchequer had power to change the duties without allowing the increase to go to the local authority at all. He thought they might press the Chancellor of the Exchequer to explain what he would do when these duties were raised, if they were raised, and whether he imagined that such increased duties could fittingly be collected by the officials of the local authority for the advantage of the Imperial Exchequer.

Lord R. CECIL asked why on earth the Government wanted this Resolution to-night. It would not be wanted until they got into Committee on the Finance Bill. At present they did not know what it meant. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had rightly said that it was impossible to have a relevant discussion on a Resolution of this kind until they knew what it meant. Surely that was a good reason for postponing it.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE said he might reply by asking why on earth it should not be passed to-night. The transaction was a very simple one. They proposed making an arrangement for the collection of certain duties by the local authorities for a consideration and for the liberation of certain officers for other purposes. All he wanted this formal stage for was to authorise him to put that in the Bill. The whole subject could be discussed on the several stages of the Bill. He thought it would be found that, when the arrangement was made, the local authorities on the whole would be satisfied with it. The whole trend of finance in the last ten or twenty years had been to encroach on the domain of Imperial finance in the interests of the local ratepayers. In this case the local ratepayers had everything to gain by getting this into the hands of its own officers. The arrangement come to was in order to save the expense and trouble of remitting the money and getting it back in some other shape. When they came to discuss the matter in Committee then would be the time when it would be permissible to enter into details asking terms and conditions.

*__Mr. CARLILE__ (Hertfordshire, St. Albans) said that this was a most extraordinary position. First of all the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that they could not get on with the Finance Bill without this Resolution, and then afterwards that he would like to have the Resolution now. The right hon. Gentleman would not tell them whether the local authorities were to have the power to increase the cost of licences on dogs, game, and armorial bearings. He did not tell the Committee anything about motor-cars, and whether their licence was to be £4 under two tons, per ton, or £40. [Cries of "Order."] But these were the things they ought to know about.

The DEPUTY-CHAIRMAN said that the hon. Gentleman's remarks had no reference to the Resolution before the Committee.

*__Mr. CARLILE__ said that what he wanted to know was whether the Government would still fix the amount of these licence duties, or would it be handed over to the local authorities to decide what they would get out of them? It was quite conceivable that some local authorities would wish to tar their roads. [Cries of "Order."] What he asked the right hon. Gentleman to do was to enumerate the licences.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I have done so twice already.

*__Mr. CARLILE__ said that the right hon. Gentleman had only referred to three—dogs, game, and armorial bearings. Were there no others, or did these comprise them all? He hoped the House would not allow the right hon. Gentleman to get this Resolution until he gave some information.

Question put, and agreed to.

2. Resolved, That it is expedient that the surplus of income over expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1908, to the extent of £600,000, instead of being applied as provided by The Sinking Fund Act, 1875, be applied to defray expenses incurred by the Commissioners of Works in connection with public offices.

3. Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of increased allowances to assessors of taxes.—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid.), in the Chair.]

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of any Expenses, so far as not otherwise provided for, incurred by the Commissioners of Works under any Act of the present session, to provide for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office, and for certain other public purposes.—(*Mr. Harcourt.*)

MR. FELL said that this was an important matter on which they ought to have some explanation. The amount of £600,000 out of the Sinking Fund had been already allocated for the purpose of the erection and completion of the Government buildings in Great George Street. This Resolution was to authorise the payment of any expenses not otherwise provided for. He did not think they should pass the Resolution without some explanation as to the total sum in which Parliament might become indebted in addition to the £600,000 already voted.

***THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS** (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale) thought he could make the matter clear. The Motion just read from the Chair was a form of the House which it was necessary to follow in order to authorise the Select Committee appointed under the Public Offices Sites (Extension) Bill, which had been read a second time, to consider a short clause in that measure. He had already explained on the Second Reading of that Bill how the money was provided. The money required to cover the cost of erecting the buildings in Great George Street was included in the £600,000 allocated in one of the Budget Resolutions. There was not the slightest intention of exceeding that amount; the whole thing was merely a formality to enable the Committee to get to work.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said he quite understood that this was merely in the nature of a formality, and that the Bill could not be finally completed until sanction had been given by the Committee of the Whole House to this financial Resolution. After all, £600,000 had just been voted out of the Sinking Fund. That was not a mere formality; and the Resolution seemed to indicate that further sums in addition to that sanctioned four years ago might be required. He observed that sanction was asked for the acquisition of land, but a great part of the land already belonged to the Government, and the money to buy it had been made available five years ago, and had only to be called up by the Treasury. The present Resolution was to authorise other expenses. What did the right hon. Gentleman anticipate would be the total cost of the acquisition of all the land required, and what other expenses were there? The right hon. Gentleman said they would take £600,000 out of the Sinking Fund and that the rest of the money they already had under the Act of 1903. He wished to know what the land was in Great George Street, and what the other expenses were. It seemed to him that there was a danger or at least a possibility of a large sum being required.

MR. COURTHOPE hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to tell the Committee that the money provided by this Resolution would be spent, and as soon as possible, in the provision of new offices for the Board of Agriculture. Not only was the Board housed in a very inconvenient, but also in a very extravagant fashion in six different buildings. The leases of those buildings, curiously enough, all fell in in about four years time, so that new buildings should be provided as soon as possible in order to avoid the necessity of renewing those leases.

*MR. HARCOURT said he had explained on the Second Reading of the Bill that the Board of Agriculture was one of the offices he hoped to be able to house in the new building. It was a little difficult to say at this moment what would be the demands of the Education Office and the Local Government Board, which had been already allotted to the existing building, and the Board of Trade would also occupy part of the new site; but he was keeping the Board of Agriculture in mind and was anxious to house them in this new building. In answer to the noble Lord, he might say that this Resolution was in the form prescribed by the House. It had nothing to do with the actual wording of the Bill of the Government. It was only to enable the Committee to deal with the provisions of the Bill and nothing more.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) [CONSOLIDATED FUND].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedent to authorise the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the Fund of the Suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland in pursuance of any Act of the present Session to provide further facilities for the erection of Houses for the Working Classes in cities and towns in Ireland.—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD said he did not wish to delay this Resolution, but he thought it was hardly fair to bring it forward in the absence of the Chief Secretary or someone responsible for the Irish administration.

*MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that he himself was responsible for the money part of the Resolution, which only arose on the discussion of the Second Reading of the Bill. There was, he found, an Irish Fund, the Irish Suitors Fund, some of which had been dormant for over fifteen years, and it was proposed that the interest of this money should be utilised for the purpose of building houses for the urban districts of Ireland and for drainage. The right hon. Gentleman who represented the Dublin University and also Gentlemen representing the North of Ireland had all assented to the suggestion and the Chief Secretary of Ireland had also assented, subject to there being any of that fund available. It had now been ascertained that there was some portion of it, though not all, available, and this formal Resolution was now moved to enable the Committee upstairs to proceed with the Bill. There was no charge on the Exchequer.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden), in moving the adjournment said that the first business to-morrow would be the Committee Stage of the expenses Resolution connected with the old-age pension scheme, to enable the Old-age Pensions Bill to be introduced subsequently. The second order would be the Irish Universities (expenses) in Committee, and the third order would be the mail contract.

Motion made, and Question, "That this House do now adjourn,"—(*Mr. Joseph Pease,*)—put, and agreed to.

Adjourned accordingly at Nineteen minutes before Nine o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Wednesday, 27th May, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Holderness Water Bill (Petition for additional Provision).—The Order of Monday last referring the Examiners certificate of non-compliance with the Standing Orders to the Standing Orders Committee, discharged.

North Eastern Railway Bill; Blaydon and Ryton Water (Transfer) Bill.—The King's consent signified; and Bills reported, with Amendments.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with an Amendment, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Local Government (Ireland) Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.]—Reported, without Amendment, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

Northern Assurance Company Bill [H.L.]; Great Northern, Piccadilly, and Brompton Railway Bill [H.L.]; Wath-upon-Dearne Urban District Council Gas Bill [H.L.], now Wath and Bolton Gas Board Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

Cheshire Lines Committee Bill.—Reported, without Amendment.

Honourable Artillery Company Bill [H.L.].—Read 2^a.

Southwell District Gas Bill; Camborne Water Bill.—Read 2^a, and committed.

Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill.—Read 3^a, with the Amendments; and passed, and returned to the Commons.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill [H.L.].—Committed.

Leicester Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Loch Leven Water Power Order Confirmation Bill.—Read 3^a (according to order) and passed.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Schools in boroughs and urban districts in England and Wales containing only one public elementary school; schools in boroughs, urban districts, and rural parishes in England and Wales, in which there is more than one public elementary school, but only one available either for boys, or for girls, or for infants.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.

Tables showing for each of the years 1900–1907, the estimated value of the imports and exports of the United Kingdom at the prices prevailing in 1900, with an introductory memorandum (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper [Cd. 3546], 1907).

HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Calendar of the manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde, K.P., preserved at Kilkenny Castle. New series, Vol. 5.

NATAL.

Further correspondence relating to native affairs in Natal (in continuation of [Cd. 3998], May 1908).

Presented (by Command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

MOTOR CAR ACTS, 1896, AND 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor cars on part of a certain highway situate within the parish of Alfriston, in the county of East Sussex, made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896, and Section 8 of the Act of 1903.

Regulation as to the restriction of the driving of motor cars on the highway known as Barge Walk, extending from Kingston Bridge to Hampton Court Bridge, in the county of Middlesex, made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896, and Section 8 of the Act of 1903.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

Regulation as to the registration of motor cars made by the Local Government Board under Section 6 of the Act of 1896, and Section 7 of the Act of 1903: Merthyr Tydfil (County Borough).—For assigning index mark to county borough.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1888.

Thirteen orders under Section 57 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board, of the following county and county borough councils:—

Anglesey.—For constituting part of the parish of Llanbadrig a new parish to be named the parish of Careglefn.

Durham.—For uniting the parishes of Darlington and Harrogate Hill to form the parish of Darlington.

Hertford.—(*a*) For uniting the parish of Letchworth (except Letchworth Detached), the parish of Norton, and part of the parish of Willian, to form the parish of Letchworth; and (*b*) for transferring Letchworth Detached to the parish of Knebworth.

Northumberland.—For uniting the parishes of Coxlodge and South Gosforth to form the parish of Gosforth.

Southampton.—For transferring part of the parish of Hound to the parish of Bursledon.

Surrey.—For uniting the parishes of Christ Church, Holy Trinity, Guildford, Saint Mary's, Guildford, Saint Nicolas, Stoke, and the Friary, to form the parish of Guildford.

Surrey.—For converting the parish of Merton into the urban district of Merton.

Surrey.—For transferring the parish of Horsell from the rural district of Chertsey to the urban district of Woking.

Surrey. — For amending the order converting the parish of Merton into the urban district of Merton.

Tynemouth (County Borough).—For uniting the parishes of Chirton, Cullercoats, North Shields, Preston, and Tynemouth, to form the parish of Tynemouth.

Westmoreland. — For uniting the parishes of Appleby and Bongate to form the parish of Appleby.

Wilts.—For defining the boundaries of the parishes of Easton and Wooton Rivers.

Yorkshire, West Riding of.—For converting the township of Garforth into the urban district of Garforth.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Leave given to the Joint Committee to hear parties interested by themselves, their counsel, agents, and witnesses, so far as the Committee think fit: The evidence taken before the Joint Committee from time to time to be printed, but no copies to be delivered except to members of the Committee, and to such other persons as the Committee shall think fit until further order. (No. 85.)

THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, on behalf of Lord Wemyss, who is unable to be present, I beg to put to the Under-Secretary of State for War the Questions standing in the name of my noble friend on the Paper, viz.:—(1) What is the number of men fixed for the Territorial Force; (2) If, as is believed, the number of the said Force is not to exceed 300,000 men, why did the Secretary for War originally "pray" the Volunteers to give him "700,000 to 900,000 men" to form the base of his Army Cone; (3) When does he expect the new Territorial Force to be complete; and how many have already joined it; (4) Of the Force, when complete, what proportion of the men composing it may be reckoned upon as being twenty years of age and upwards; (5) What is the minimum age of the men serving in neighbouring Continental Armies; (6) What will be the normal annual period of training of the Territorial recruits and of the whole Territorial Force; (7) What number of men of the Territorial Force so trained shall we be able to put in the field for the defence of Great Britain after deducting men under twenty years of age, normal casualties, and the forces necessary for the defence of Ireland and the garrisoning of our fortified dockyards and forts in Great Britain, Ireland, and the Channel Islands; (8) When and within what period of time could the Territorial Force be mobilised fit in all respects to take the field after the order for mobilisation has been given; (9) Will this Territorial Force realise and give practical effect to the Resolution unanimously passed by the Lords—

> "That our land defences should at all times be such that no nation would ever attempt in any form a hostile landing on our shores."

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord LUCAS): My Lords, in reply to the first Question, the numbers fixed for the Territorial Force are 11,895 officers and 302,199 non-commissioned officers and men. With regard to the second Question, it refers, no doubt, to a speech made by Mr. Haldane at Newcastle on 15th September, 1906, in which my right hon. friend said:—

> "If we had sufficient enthusiasm we might get into the field and manage to maintain an Army of 700,000, 800,000, or 900,000 men. The thing was within compass."

Mr. Haldane subsequently explained this in the House of Commons, when he said he was speaking of an extremely exceptional and unlikely case. He never intended to maintain or attempt to maintain a force of anything approaching 900,000 men. But he claimed that in the organisation of the force we should have at hand the machinery of expansion whereby, should a great emergency arise and the national enthusiasm be thereby aroused, there would not be the slightest difficulty in raising 900,000 men.

With regard to the third Question, the last figure I am able to give the noble Lord is the number of non-commissioned officers and men transferred up to 1st May, namely, 106,092. We have not got the figure as to officers yet. I hope to have the figures up to 1st June very shortly. I should not like to make any forecast as to when the Force will be complete, but if the present rate is continued it should be complete in about three months. The Question as to age I am unable to answer, as the ages of Volunteers joining has never been included in any return. But we have the ages of the Yeomanry. Out of 23,919 Yeomanry, there were 3,354 men under twenty. It is not expected that the new scheme will make much difference in the age of men who join.

As to the age in Continental armies, though the men generally join as conscripts, they are allowed to volunteer earlier so as to get their term of service over. In France, Germany, Spain and Turkey, the ages are: Conscripts twenty, Volunteers eighteeen, though in France Volunteers may come in at seventeen in time of war; in Austria-Hungary, Conscripts twenty and threequarters, and Volunteers seventeen; in Russia, twenty-one and nineteen; in Italy, twenty and seventeen; in Portugal, twenty and sixteen; and in Belgium, nineteen and sixteen. As to the normal annual period of training for the Territorial Force, the drills required for recruits are: Artillery and Engineers forty-five the first year, and in the Cavalry and Infantry forty; and for trained men, twenty in the Artillery, fifteen in the Engineers, and ten in the Cavalry and Infantry. The period of camp is from eight to fifteen days, except in the case of the Cavalry, for which force it is eight to eighteen days, the general officer commanding deciding as to how long, between the minimum and the maximum, the different units should go out. There are besides extra courses for officers and non-commissioned officers laid down in the leaflet issued on the training of the Force.

LORD RAGLAN: Those are not compulsory.

LORD LUCAS: They are voluntary, but officers have to go through some of them before promotion. In addition to these courses, further facilities will be given for longer courses, which may be taken advantage of. In his next Question the noble Lord asks for what amounts to a disclosure of mobilisation plans, and that is information which has never been given. I might point out, however, that if you were mobilising the Territorial Force it would not be at all necessary to exclude men under twenty years of age, though they are excluded for foreign service in climates like India on the ground of health. There is nothing to prevent men under twenty years of age taking the field in this country if they are passed as fit.

With regard to the next Question, it is hoped that, when arrangements which are being pushed forward are complete, it will be possible to mobilise the Territorial Force instantly, the moment the whole of the Regular Reserves have been called out; but the Force will require a period of war training after mobilisation, as has always been said, before it can be considered fit to take the field against trained foreign troops. As to the last Question, the Territorial Force forms a most important part of the organisation of the military forces of the country, and will, undoubtedly, in the opinion of the Government, give effect to the Resolution quoted.

LORD NEWTON: My Lords, the statement which the Under-Secretary of State for War has made is not a long one, but it is one of considerable importance, and I trust that its significance will not be missed by the House. In fact, I do not think I am exaggerating when I express the opinion that the points included in these Questions, and in the noble Lord's reply, are of considerably more importance than the question which was discussed with great force the other day, and which was, in effect, whether or not a reduction in the Regular Artillery was a desirable thing. That, no doubt, was an important matter, but it was not a vital matter. The question whether we have an adequate national force standing behind the Regular Army is, I maintain, a vital matter, and one upon which the future of this country may possibly depend.

We know, from statements that have been made from time to time, that the formation of this Territorial Force is regarded by the Government as an experiment of a somewhat hazardous nature. I would ask them, in view of the reply which has just been given, whether they are of opinion that the experiment appears likely to prove a success. To my mind it is a venture of a singularly unpromising character. The inducements to undertake a venture of this kind are the prospects of gain, but in this case there is no question of gain at all. It is a question of endeavouring to get back what you have already parted with. The Secretary of State for War has parted with the Volunteers, a force larger in numbers than the Territorial Force he is seeking to obtain, and he is now, with his colleagues, endeavouring by every possible means, and with the assistance of his political opponents, to induce these men to re-enlist, with what results we have just learned.

I do not wish to discuss this either in a party spirit or at length, but I should like to be permitted to put in a few sentences what I believe to be an impartial view of the military situation. After the South African War was concluded, a Royal Commission sat, under the Presidency of Lord Elgin, and came to the conclusion that the one thing which was of absolute necessity to this country was an expansion of our military system outside the Regular Forces of the Crown. Where, I ask, is this expansion? I may well ask. Instead of expansion we have contraction—contraction of the Regular Army and contraction of the Auxiliary Forces under their new designation of the Territorial Force. It was with this in his mind that the present Secretary of State for War, in spite of what the noble Lord opposite has said, went about the country telling everybody, wherever he got an opportunity, that unless we could produce a nation in arms we were practically doomed, and he asked them to give him anything from 700,000 to 900,000 men. He found, as was to be expected, first of all that he could not get the money from his own side; and, in the second place, that the country would not give him the men. The result is that his 900,000 men have been whittled down to 302,000 and this number has not been asked for on consideration of military strategy or any other necessity. The 302,000 represent the hypothetical maximum which you can possibly obtain under the obsolete voluntary system.

The noble Lord has told us that of the 302,000 only 106,000 have been obtained. I do not suppose that this meagre result has made much impression upon the Secretary of State for War, because he had already committed himself to the fact that he was, so to speak, prepared to go to allotment on a 30 per cent. subscription. The noble Lord expressed confidence of a rapid increase in these numbers. But what reason did he show for that confidence? The noble Lord abstained from answering some of the Questions on the Paper, and I notice, also, that his chief has carefully abstained from asking what would have been, no doubt, an extremely inconvenient question, with regard to the age and the quality of the men who are enlisting in the Territorial Force.

LORD LUCAS: The ages of the men have to appear on the attestation forms, but as there are over 100,000 forms and they only came in quite recently, we have not yet got out the statement of their ages. But their ages are being taken.

LORD NEWTON: I hope we shall have fuller information on that point later. But, upon the average, this Army is considerably younger than any Continental Army. There is another important question—namely, how many of these men have engaged for one year only? My information is that something like 90 per cent. of the total force have engaged for one year only. Whether, in view of the information that has been elicited from the Under-Secretary, this state of things gives practical effect to the Resolution which was passed by this House, I will leave your Lordships to decide. But, in addition to the facts which have been disclosed by the Answer, let me point out, what everybody knows, that the Regular Army has already been largely reduced. I do not wish to enlarge on this point, but I do desire, because I think it is most important, to draw attention to two expressions of opinion which have emanated from the Front Bench during the course of the last few days. One was the opinion of the Under-Secretary himself that the preparation and effective training of the Territorial Force was not to be looked for in time of peace, but was to be provided for when, to use his own words, we were suffering from the war fever and were engaged in a race against time; and the second was the declaration to the effect that it was never contemplated that more than two-fifths of the Regular Army should leave these shores until the Territorial Force had been sufficiently trained. That being so, I should like to ask the Government what becomes of their expeditionary force?

To put it plainly, we are to be placed in this position, that the Fleet apparently is to be chained to our shores, and the greater proportion of the Regular Army is to be bottled up in this country until such time as the Territorial Army is trained sufficiently to meet Continental troops in the field. I think these admissions and statements speak for themselves, and it is quite unnecessary for me to elaborate the case any further. But it does seem to me, in view of these facts and admissions, that it is really almost intolerable that the Secretary of State for War should go about at this moment boasting that his scheme of reform is one of the greatest successes of modern days. He has achieved success in a certain sense. His success lies in this, that he has done what few people have done—he has succeeded in getting the country to take words for facts and to substitute shams for realities. When the emergency arises, and when, under the delirium of war fever, we are engaged in a race against time, I shall be happy to think that I have had no part in responsibility for the military situation.

LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I should like to ask the noble Lord why he cannot give us the number of officers The chairmen of the County Associations were requested to send in their lists before 15th April, and I believe the majority did. They were told that the lists should be in by that date in order that the officers might be gazetted on 15th April, and appear in the Army List in May. I cannot see why the number of officers cannot be given. I should like to ask, further, whether great difficulty has not arisen on account of these officers not being legally entitled to attest recruits, owing to their not having been gazetted. I am afraid that in this way a good many recruits have been attested illegally.

THE EARL OF ERROLL: My Lords, in his reply to the eighth Question standing on the Paper, the noble Lord the Under-Secretary said the Territorial Force would be able to mobilise instantly. I should like to inquire whether arrangements have been made for the horses which would be necessary for mobilisation. Speaking from memory, I think the number of horses required on the mobilisation of the Regular Home Forces is 53,000, and I should like to know from the noble Lord whether, beyond this, any arrangement has been made for the horses necessary to enable the Territorial Force to mobilise instantly.

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: My Lords, I also have a small Question to put to the noble Lord. I understood him to say that there were certain extra courses laid down which officers would have to pass before promotion. As there seems to be some little doubt on this point, I should like to have it clearly stated whether, in the case of those officers who have undertaken to raise new units, and who naturally in the case of a battery of Field Artillery would take the rank of major, that rank will be allowed to stand, and how long those officers will be given before being compelled to pass the examination?

LORD RAGLAN: I should like to ask the noble Lord whether it is the fact that the Territorial Force will have less training than the old Volunteers. My recollection is that the Volunteers did sixty recruits drills, with twelve annual drills for trained men. In the case of the Territorial Force I gather that the drills will be: Recruits, 45; trained soldiers, 10.

LORD LUCAS: I think the numbers are forty and ten. At any rate, the periods have not been altered except in the case of the Artillery, and there they have been increased. Moreover, the whole of the Territorial Force can now have a fortnight's training, whereas in the case of the Volunteers only a certain number of selected Infantry battalions received more than eight days. In reply to Lord Dartmouth, I may say that it is not our intention to compel officers who are raising new units to qualify before they are gazetted. I am afraid I cannot state off-hand how long they will be given to pass the qualifying examination, but in this matter every consideration will be shown.

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: I have already asked two Questions on this point. The Answer I received to one Question was that the period would be a year, and the Answer to the other was two years. We should like to have definitely stated the actual time which will be allowed to these officers to qualify, and I will put a Question on the Paper on that point.

LORD LUCAS: As to the Question put to me by Lord Erroll, I may say that the whole question of horses is under consideration at the present moment. It is impossible for me to tell the House what exactly is being done, but I can assure the noble Earl that the Army Council fully realise how important it is that it should be possible for the provision of horses for the Regular Army on mobilisation and also for the Territorial Army to proceed simultaneously. We know that there are sufficient horses in the country to mobilise both the Regular Army and the Territorial Force, and we hope to be able to work out some scheme whereby the process of satisfying the requirements of the Regular Army in the matter of horses will not interfere with the horsing of the Territorial Force on mobilisation. With regard to Lord Heneage's Question, the returns were not all in by the date at which they were originally asked for, and there has in consequence been a certain amount of delay in gazetting officers. They have, however, transferred in large numbers, and we are very satisfied with the way in which they have come in. The names of many thousands are being prepared for the *Gazette*, and the mere clerical work is occupying a great deal of time. We hope, however, to have them all gazetted very shortly. As to officers not gazetted being unable to attest recruits, I speak with some uncertainty, but I think the officers retain their old commissions in the meanwhile, and therefore would be, I think, legally entitled to attest.

LORD HENEAGE: I can assure the noble Lord that the point was thoroughly discussed at a meeting of the Lincolnshire Territorial Association, and two of the commanding officers, who are very able lawyers, were quite certain that the officers could not attest.

THE MARQUESS OF HERTFORD: I should like to ask when the question of uniform, and especially the walking-out dress, will be settled. There are something like 2,000 men already enrolled in the Birmingham battalions, and it will be quite impossible to get them clothed in time for camp unless the question is speedily determined.

LORD LUCAS: An announcement will be made on the subject almost immediately.

EMPLOYMENT OF OLD SOLDIERS.

THE EARL OF CARLISLE: My Lords, I rise to ask His Majesty's Government whether they will maintain in future the custom which has been in force for nearly thirty years, of appointing meritorious old soldiers to the staff of the National Galleries. This Question relates to the posts in the National Gallery and the Tate Gallery, which number about fifty. These appointments are under the Patronage Secretary of the Treasury. Formerly it was the custom to appoint to these positions butlers and footmen of Cabinet Ministers. But so much insubordination and chaos resulted that in the year 1882, at the request of the National Gallery Board, the Government sent a competent non-commissioned officer to establish discipline there. This appointment was so satisfactory that the Board requested the Government to continue in future to give the appointments to meritorious old soldiers; but this principle has not been followed in every case. The Patronage Secretary has occasionally reverted to the old system, and I find that in the last ten years, out of twenty-six appointments, twenty-two have been given to old soldiers. When the principle of appointing old soldiers was for the time departed from I interviewed the Patronage Secretary, at the request of the National Gallery Board, and he promised that in future the principle should be strictly adhered to. I understood that that promise applied to the office and not merely to the individual, but the last appointment that has been made is so contrary to that practice that I should like to ask the future intentions of the Government regarding it. I find that the qualifications of the candidate who was given the last appointment by the Patronage Secretary are that he is the son of the late Prime Minister's coachman, that he was for some time a helper in the stables, and that he had since been employed in a brewery. I do not think that those qualifications should have outweighed the claims of a number of old soldiers with excellent characters who were applying for the post, and therefore I wish to ask the Government whether they will maintain the principle of giving these appointment to these men.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, I can assure the noble Earl that the claims of ex-soldiers and sailors are being carefully considered in connection with these appointments. A large proportion of the vacancies have been filled by them in the past and are likely in the future to be so filled. Since the present Government came into office I understand there have been eight vacancies. Three of them have been filled by Army men; one by a man who had formerly served in the Metropolitan Police, another in the Military Police, two by clerks, and one by a civilian. I am not aware that in the case of the last appointment it was a son of the coachman of the late Prime Minister who filled the vacancy, but if further information is desired on this point, I shall be happy to obtain it for the noble Earl.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: I am very glad that my noble friend on the cross benches has asked this Question, and I feel quite sure the Secretary of State for War will be grateful to him for having asked it. It is within my knowledge that one Secretary of State after another has had to fight this battle. We have always felt that one of the few things we could do to help recruiting was to have an understanding that every minor Government appointment which an old soldier was fitted to fill should be earmarked for an old soldier. I have often experienced the difficulty which I am afraid the present Secretary of State for War has had with his colleagues. My colleagues always in principle professed the utmost readiness to meet my wishes; but I am bound to say I had the greatest difficulty in preventing them occasionally from smuggling in those faithful retainers, one of whom on this occasion appears to have insinuated himself into the National Gallery. But I do hope it will be laid down for the future, not that as Lord Denman said, a large proportion of these appointments should be given to well qualified old soldiers, but that the whole of them shall be so given. They are appointments for which old soldiers are perfectly fitted; they have been filled up by old soldiers to the satisfaction of the trustees, and there is no sort of reason why they should not all be given to men of that description.

RIFLE RANGE RENTS.

LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under Secretary of State for War by whose authority the Accountants Department of the War Office have refused to sanction the payment of the yearly rents due for rifle ranges in Lincolnshire in 1907–1908; and to state why the Territorial Association should be asked to pay rent for the use of ranges during a period before they were legally constituted in 1907–1908. I think a few words of explanation of this most extraordinary question are necessary. In Lincolnshire we had three Volunteer battalions, and as they were reduced to two the colonel of one of the battalions had to retire and the adjutant was compelled to go back to his regiment. The consequence was that they desired as speedily as possible to square up the accounts for last year. Among the items which they paid, was, as usual, eight guineas each for the use of two ranges during the military year 1907–1908. To their astonishment the accounts were sent back with these two items disallowed, and they were told that they were to get the sixteen guineas from the Territorial Association. I received information of this a few days ago, and I refused to allow the matter to go before the Finance Committee because I did not think it a proper payment to be made out of the Territorial funds. The Accountant-General was asked why payment was disallowed, and he gave as his reason that Lady Day was 6th April, and that as this was subsequent to 1st April the Volunteers had expired and the Territorial funds were liable for the payment of this amount. I thought this a most extraordinary reason to give. One might just as well say that a person who took a house on 1st April for the season was bound to pay the previous quarter's rates because the demand was sent in after he had taken the house. I cannot think that the Secretary of State will for a moment countenance this quibble, if not sharp practice. I have raised this question because I think it is one of some consequence. This is the first case, but unless attention is called to it it will be made a precedent. I am bound to say that I think the amount of money allowed to the Associations is not anything like sufficient for what we shall find necessary to meet our own expenses; and if we are to have the same amount of correspondence from the War Office and from the staff of the command as has taken place recently it will be quite impossible for one secretary to do the work. As to the payment in question, I do not think the auditor appointed by an Association to look into the accounts at the end of the financial year and to see how the Association had spent their funds under the financial provisions of the Memorandum sent out in March, would pass an expenditure for rent for the use of ranges during a period before the Association was legally constituted.

LORD LUCAS: My Lords, this case is not really so black as the noble Lord has painted it. It is a mere matter of book-keeping, and unless it was done in this way you would have a somewhat complicated sum to work out as to how much rent was due by the Association and how much was due by the Volunteer corps. There was also the fact that there might be considerable difficulty owing to the accounts not being in when the Volunteer accounts were being squared up. It was, therefore, decided, in order to simplify matters, that any charge for ranges or other matters which fell due after March 31st should be paid by the County Associations. The County Associations will not suffer in any way, for any expenditure not coming within the year for which they are responsible will be paid back to them, and as the Associations are entitled to draw money from the War Office on account, it will not be necessary to wait till the end of the financial year in order to recoup themselves.

LORD HENEAGE: It simply comes to this, that we are asked to pay out of our funds for the current year debts incurred last year, and which ought to have been paid by the State last year. Why are we to advance this money and to wait to receive it until after the auditor has passed the accounts twelve months hence?

LORD LUCAS: This is a mere matter of book-keeping, and as I have explained, the Lincolnshire County Association can draw money from the War Office on account. I can assure the noble Lord that, whatever items in the Association's expenditure may possibly be questioned in the future, this certainly will not be one of them.

ASSIZES AND QUARTER SESSIONS BILL.

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the day for the Second Reading read.

*LORD ALVERSTONE: My Lords, I rise to move the Second Reading of this Bill, the object of which is to dispense with the attendance of jurors at assizes and quarter sessions, and with the holding of assizes and quarter sessions in certain cases. It has sometimes happened, particularly in the Principality of Wales, that twenty-four grand jurors, and generally forty or fifty petty jurors, have been summoned and kept about the town probably for a whole day at great inconvenience when there have been no prisoners for trial. I have been asked by more than one high sheriff whether arrangements could not be made in the event of there being no prisoners for trial, although there may be other business, that jurors should not be summoned. After consultation with Mr. Justice Channell and other learned Judges, I provide in the Bill that if, in the case of assizes, there is no prisoner committed for trial within five days, then notice should be sent to the jurors that they need not attend. Of course, if there was other business to be transacted by the grand jurors they could meet. It only is necessary to provide for what may happen during the five days. Where a prisoner may be committed for trial, the Bill provides that he can be committed to a future quarter sessions of the county or a future assizes. If a speedy trial is desired the prisoner can be committed for trial to an adjoining quarter sessions or assizes. My attention has been called by one noble Lord to the fact that it would be very inconvenient if many cases were sent from one county to a neighbouring quarter sessions, but I can assure the House that it is only intended that power to commit to another sessions should be given during the period of five days. If that is not quite clear I shall be pleased to make it so in Committee. It is very rarely indeed that there are no prisoners at an assizes. In my experience it has only happened once in ten years, and that was in the City of York and had nothing to do with the county assizes of York. But every now and again in North and South Wales it does happen that there are no prisoners for trial. Therefore I provide that the Bill shall apply to assizes. With regard to indictment which may be presented independently, of previous proceedings before magistrates the Bill provides that five days notice should be given of the intention. I am sure the Bill if passed will relieve a considerable number of small farmers and tradespeople in the country. I need hardly say that this is not in any way a party measure. I hope His Majesty's Government will support the Bill, and if the clauses do not carry out what I have stated to be their object I will gladly consider Amendments in Committee.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*Lord Alverstone.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR (Lord LOREBURN): My Lords, the principle which the most noble Lord has recommended, namely, that jurors shall not be unnecessarily summoned when there is no business for them to do, is one so eminently reasonable that it does not seem to require much commendation. As to the machinery of the Bill I have no criticism to offer, but if a little time is allowed the Home Office may have some questions to ask, or some Amendments to suggest. But there is nothing at all in the principle of the Bill but what I most heartily agree to.

LORD BELPER: My Lords, I am in entire sympathy with the Bill which the noble and learned Lord has introduced. I happen to have been a chairman of quarter sessions for a great many years, and it has frequently been my lot to try to explain to jurymen that they were not called together unnecessarily, and that I had no option except to call them. That is always a very unpleasant duty for a chairman of quarter sessions to have to perform. It would, however, be extremely inconvenient that there should be many cases sent from one county to a neighbouring quarter sessions, and I am glad that point has been made clear. It may be necessary to make some provision for expense that might be incurred by neighbouring sessions in this connection. Subject to these remarks I cordially support the Bill, which, I think, will do away with a considerable cause of grumbling among grand and petty jurors.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday, the 16th day of June next.

TERRITORIAL ARMY RECRUITING.

*THE EARL OF MOUNT EDGCUMBE: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War how many units in each arm of the Territorial Force have been recognised as having enlisted 30 per cent. of their establishment; how many men have enlisted in the Yeomanry; and in the case of the Infantry how many have enlisted for four years, and how many for only one year. I think it will be of interest to have this information. In the case of the Yeomanry, which I am very glad are to retain their time-honoured designation, I imagine they would have very little difficulty in keeping up their numbers, for they are much less affected than the old Volunteers by the new change. As to my last Question, if there are a great number of old Volunteers who have enlisted for only one year, as I think there probably are, it will show that they are not altogether satisfied with the terms offered to them, and have only re-enlisted tentatively. This will, no doubt, have an effect upon recruiting from outside. Hitherto the chief recruiting agents have certainly been the men themselves, but a man who is sufficiently doubtful to be only willing to join tentatively for one year will not feel justified in asking another man to join for four years. I believe the chief objections to re-engaging are the liabilities to penal fines, the amount of which is uncertain, and compulsory camp with an insufficient allowance, especially in the case of married men who are not non-commissioned officers. I have always felt that these objections might be removed, or, at any rate, modified, without any detriment to the service or additional cost to the country. In this respect there is a great difference between a farmer who enlists as a trooper in the Yeomanry and an artisan who enlists as a private in the Infantry. I believe I am correct in saying the man who joins the Yeomanry and has a horse of his own will receive during his period of training, and including the cost of his own food and that of his horse, 11s. 8d. per day, whereas the working man who joins the Infantry cannot reckon upon getting more than 1s. 6d. or 1s. 9d. per day, although he may be giving up a week's wages of 3s., 4s., or 5s. per day. That may be all very well for a youngster, but it is very hard on a man who has to pay house rent and keep his wife as well during the training. The noble Lord the Under-Secretary admitted last night, with reference to the 1s. fee for medical examination, that the plan would not work unless a large number of medical men could be reckoned upon to give their services in the matter gratuitously. I do not know whether any similar voluntary assistance is anticipated in regard to an increase of the camp allowance. No doubt there may be many patriotic people who would be very glad to contribute in order to improve the position of these men in camp, and I think that under the old Volunteer system that might have been possible; but I believe it would be very dangerous to tempt men to enlist under the present system by any hope of additional assistance procured in this way, for a voluntary fund could not be regarded as permanent.

LORD LUCAS: My Lords, up to 5th May we had recognised forty-eight Yeomanry units out of fifty-six; 287 Artillery units out of 369; sixty-nine Engineering units out of 117; 172 Infantry units out of 204; twenty-seven Army Service Corps units out of seventy; and forty-five Medical units out of eighty-one. Up to 1st May the number of men enlisted in the Yeomanry was 12,044, and in the Infantry 72,179; of those men 8,520 had joined for the full term of four years. As to this last figure, we do not hold a gloomy view, because no pressure was put upon the men to join for the whole term of four years; they were given the offer that they might go into the Territorial Force for a year and see how they liked it. We have every confidence that the men will join again, and, from what we have heard, the men who have joined and already done their camp service are likely to continue with the force. We have given up to 30th June for recruiting. The men are coming in very steadily, and the pick of them have already sent in their names. It is only in exceptional cases where there is any hanging back. The Yeomanry are coming in exceptionally well. Everything points to our having a large increase of present numbers by the end of next month. As to going into camp, it will rest with the general officer commanding to decide what is or is not a sufficient reason for absence, but there is no ground for supposing that men will be fined for absenting themselves if they can produce a valid reason.

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY: Can the noble Lord give any idea as to when the special Order will be issued with reference to the formation of the new Irish Yeomanry? Our period of training is coming on shortly, and we are anxious to have all the rules and regulations.

LORD LUCAS: The Order will be ready for publication very soon, but I am afraid I cannot tell the noble Earl exactly when.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL [H.L.].

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS BILL [H.L.].

Amendments reported (according to order); and Bills to be read 3ª on Monday next.

REGISTRATION BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

PROSECUTION OF OFFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL.

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 27th May, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Llanelly Gas Bill [Lords].—As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Ayr Corporation Tramways Order Confirmation Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, relating to Ayr Corporation Tramways," presented by Mr. Sinclair; read the first time; and ordered (under Section 9 of the Act) to be read a second time upon Thursday, 4th June, and to be printed. [Bill 248.]

Oyster and Mussel Fishery (Bay of Firth) Order Confirmation Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order under the Sea Fisheries Act, 1868, relating to a several Oyster and Mussel Fishery at the Bay of Firth," presented by Mr. Sinclair; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 249.]

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to:—Edinburgh Corporation (Tramways, etc.) Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment.

Amendments to:—Argentine North-Eastern Railway Bill [Lords]; Camberwell and other Metropolitan Borough Councils (Superannuation) Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act for amalgamating the undertakings of the Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction Railway Company, the Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction Railway Company, and the East and West Junction Railway Company; and for other purposes." [Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Redditch, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords].

Also a Bill, intituled, "An Act to extend the time for the construction of certain authorised tramways of the Bristol Tramways and Carriage Company, Limited, and for the acquisition of lands in connection therewith; and for other purposes." [Bristol Tramways Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to provide for the sale of the property of the Upton-upon-Severn Town Hall trustees; and for other purposes." [Upton Town Hall Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make further provision in regard to the undertaking of the South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Company." [South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords].

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for enabling the Cambrian Railways Company to raise further money by the creation and issue of debenture stock." [Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords].

And also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make better provisions for the constitution of the Court of Wardens and Assistants of Rochester Bridge, in the county of Kent; to empower the Court to contribute to the funds of the new college of Cobham, in the same county; and for other purposes." [Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords].

Stratford-upon-Avon, Towcester, and Midland Junction, Evesham, Reddish, and Stratford-upon-Avon Junction, and East and West Junction Railways (Amalgamation) Bill [Lords]; Bristol Tramways Bill [Lords]; Upton Town Hall Bill [Lords]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords]; Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords]; Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Southwark, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

DAIRIES (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Inverness, against; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Pittenweem, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Macclesfield; and Northern Division of Somerset to lie upon the Table.

Petition for alteration: From Cardiff; Lowestoft; Mexborough; Paddington; and Wandsworth Common; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aberdeen; Anston; Bangor; Bath; Batheaston; Beighton; Blaby; Cardiff (eight); Chelsea; Gilwern; Hexham; Long Eaton (five); Meersbrook; Magor and Undy; Nine Elms; Oldham; Penypark; Renton; Rhuddlan; St. Albans; Tiverton; Trenddyn; and Tudhoe; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Ayr; Dundee; Edinburgh; Glasgow; Kilmarnock (two); Methven; and Woodside; to lie upon the Table.

MERCHANDISE MARKS (No. 2) BILL.

Petition from Edinburgh, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Inverness, against; to lie upon the Table.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Petition of the Glasgow Shipowners' Association, against; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

MOTOR CAR ACTS.

Copies presented, of Regulations made by the Local Government Board under the Motor Car Acts:—I. County of East Sussex; II. County of Middlesex; III. County Borough of Merthyr Tydfil [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT, 1888.

Copy presented, of Orders made by the various County and County Borough Councils in England and Wales under Section 57 of the Act, as confirmed by the Local Government Board [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

NATAL.

Copy presented, of Further Correspondence relating to Native Affairs in

Natal [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

ADMIRALTY CASUALTIES, ETC.

Return ordered, "giving the number of ships and other craft of war which have been in accidents since the 1st day of January, 1901; giving the number of vessels totally lost and what their original cost was, with the numbers of those repaired in Government dockyards and those repaired outside; showing also the number of lives lost as a result of accidents during the years referred to; and, further, showing the amount paid in pensions, etc., to the dependents of those who lost their lives, with the total cost involved."—(*Mr. Vincent Kennedy.*)

EAST INDIA (INCOME AND EXPENDITURE).

Address for "Return of the Net Income and Expenditure of British India under certain specified heads for the eleven years from 1896–7 to 1906–7 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 119, of Session 1907)."—*Mr. Buchanan.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Motor Cab Regulations.

MR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the London motor cab companies are requiring their drivers, before accepting a fare to outlying suburban districts, to endeavour to enter into a bargain with the passenger, before accepting a fare, to pay 6d. per mile back-mileage, and failing which, if the driver is unable to secure a fare back, to charge the driver 6d. per mile back-mileage; and whether such a demand in any way infringes the terms on which the licence is issued.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Motor-cab drivers are not entitled to demand return fares inside the Metropolitan Police district. Outside the district the Secretary of State has no authority to prevent a driver making an arrangement with the hirer for the payment of a return fare, and I understand that the drivers have been instructed not to accept fares outside the district except in consideration of some return fare.

MR. COOPER: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been directed to the action of the Metropolitan Police in allowing taximeter motor cabs, licensed to carry two passengers, to carry with impunity four, and occasionally five passengers; and whether he will consider the advisability, in the interest of other licensed drivers, of directing the police to secure a stricter compliance with the terms of the licence.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The rule that a cab should not carry more passengers than it is licensed for applies equally to horse-drawn cabs and to motor cabs. In either case, it would cause great inconvenience to the public if it were enforced rigidly or without discretion; and I do not propose to direct the police to interfere except in cases of serious overcrowding.

Pay of Senior Postmen and Lobby Officers.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): To ask the Postmaster-General when the recommendations of the Select Committee, so far as they affect the class of senior postmen and lobby officers, will come into operation; and whether the officers entitled to an increased scale of pay will receive it as from 1st January last, as has been done in the case of other classes.

MR. PICKERSGILL: To ask the Postmaster-General whether he proposes to place all the officers appointed as senior postmen and lobby officers in the new class of head postmen, having regard to the fact that they have always been acknowledged as one class by the Department; and, if not, will he say what will be the method of selection.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) It will be convenient to answer these two

Questions together. The case of the senior postmen and lobby officers is now engaging my attention, and I hope to be in a position shortly to announce a decision. Any increase in the scale of pay will, of course, take effect from 1st January last.

Irish Land Purchase Finance.

MR. BARRIE (Londonderry, N.): To ask the Prime Minister when he now expects to make his promised statement *re* Land Purchase (Ireland) Finance.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) As I have already said more than once in answer to Questions in the House, I am unable to fix an exact date, but the statement will be made as soon as possible.

Foreign Trawlers.

MR. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can now give the information recently promised as to the total number of steam trawling vessels registered under the Norwegian and other foreign flags.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) I understand that full particulars on the subject will shortly be laid before Parliament in a Return which is being prepared by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Appointments for Boy Clerks.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): To ask the Postmaster-General, in view of the fact that the question of increasing the percentage of appointments now allotted to boy clerks when competing for third class clerkships in the engineer's department has been in abeyance for several months, will he consider the advisability of at once increasing the percentage to 50 per cent. both in London and in the provinces.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I have recently arranged for 10 per cent. of the third class clerkships in the London superintending engineers' offices to be reserved for boy clerks in the engineering department, in addition to the same percentage of similar clerkships in the provinces which had previously been reserved for them. To increase the precentage of such appointments reserved for boy clerks could only be done at the expense of other classes of Post Office servants.

Government Printing Contracts.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury, if he can state the dates upon which the existing contracts for printing and stationery work, respectively, for the various Government Departments expire, with the names of the contractors for each class or group of work, and the localities in which the work is being produced, and if any portions of the contracts in question are sub-let, and, if so, the names of the sub-contractors and the localities in which such work is being carried out.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The current bookwork printing contracts are about thirty-nine in number; thirty-one expire on the 31st December next, and the remainder at various dates up to March, 1912. Other contracts are:—Jobwork printing, twenty-six contracts, 30th June, 1908 to 30th September, 1912. Printing of a miscellaneous character, ten contracts, 6th August, 1908 to 1st August, 1910. Lithography, seven contracts, 31st December, 1908 to 31st December, 1912. Leather binding, seven contracts, 30th September, 1909 to 30th April, 1913. Vellum and account book binding, thirteen contracts, 31st March, 1909 to 3rd September, 1913. There are, in addition, some few contracts for specific works both in printing and binding; the number of such orders unexecuted is between eighty and ninety, and they should all be completed by the end of the year. Some fifty-two contracts, which expire on the 5th July, 1910, for printing calendars of prisons for His Majesty's Prisons, are executed locally throughout the country. Seven contracts for printing garrison and district orders for Army Commands are executed locally, and expire on the 28th February, 1910. No permission, such as is required by the terms of the contract, has been given by the Stationery Office for the sub-letting of any of the contracts or of any portion of them. The following are the holders of the various term contracts (as distinguished from those of a specific work), and the places at which the work is done—

Contractor.	Number of Contracts held.						Where Executed.
	Printing.				Binding.		
	Book-work.	Job-work.	Miscellaneous.	Lithography.	Leather	Vellum.	
Abercromby, W. and W.	—	—	1	—	—	—	Liverpool
Anthony Brothers, Limited	1	—	—	—	—	—	Hereford
Banks and Co., Limited	—	—	—	1	—	—	Edinburgh
Browne and Nolan, Limited	—	1	—	—	1	—	Dublin
Cahill and Co.	1	2	—	—	—	—	Dublin
Campbell, D., and Son	—	1	—	—	—	1	Glasgow
Collins, G., and Son	—	—	—	—	1	—	London
Darling and Son, Limited	6	—	—	—	—	—	London
Diprose and Bateman	1	—	—	—	—	—	London
Drake, Driver, and Leaver, Limited.	—	—	—	—	—	1	London
Eyre and Spottiswoode	7	—	2	1	1	—	London
Fraser, J.	—	—	—	—	1	—	London
Gale and Polden, Limited	—	2	—	—	—	—	Aldershot
Griffith, W. P. and Sons, Limited.	—	9	1	—	—	—	London
Harrison and Sons	3	—	—	1	—	—	London
Hazell, Watson, and Viney, Limited.	—	2	—	—	—	—	London
Hedderwick, J., and Sons, Limited.	1	—	—	—	—	—	Glasgow
Keliher, J. J., and Co. Limited.	2	—	—	—	—	—	London
Love and Malcolmson, Limited.	1	—	—	—	—	—	Redhill
McCorquodale and Co., Limited.	—	—	2	—	—	2	London, Newton-le-Willows, & Wolverton

Contractor.	Number of Contracts held.						Where executed.
	Printing.				Binding.		
	Book-work.	Job-work.	Miscellaneous.	Lithography.	Leather.	Vellum.	
Mackie and Co., Limited	1	—	—	—	—	—	Warrington.
Malby and Sons	—	—	—	1	—	—	London
Millington and Sons, Limited.	—	1	—	—	—	—	London
Morrison and Gibb, Limited	—	2	—	—	—	2	Edinburgh
Neill and Co., Limited	2	—	—	—	—	—	Edinburgh
Nelson, T., and Sons, Limited.	—	—	—	—	1	—	Edinburgh
Nichols, J. B., and Sons	1	—	—	—	—	—	London
Robinson Printing Co., Limited.	—	—	1	—	—	—	Brighton
Stevens, W. H., Executors	1	—	—	—	—	—	Norwich
Suttley and Silverlock, Limited.	—	1	—	—	—	—	London
Thom, A., and Co., Limited	2	1	—	1	—	4	Dublin
Truscott, J., and Son Limited.	2	—	1	—	2	—	London
Vacher and Sons	1	—	—	—	—	—	London
Veale, Chifferiel, and Co., Limited.	1	—	—	—	—	—	London
Vernon, C.	—	—	1	—	—	—	London
Waterlow Brothers and Layton, Limited.	—	1	—	—	—	1	London
Waterlow and Sons, Limited	1	3	—	—	—	2	London
Weller and Graham, Limited	—	—	—	1	—	—	London
Wyman and Sons, Limited	4	—	1	1	—	—	London & Reading

Returns of Cattle Sales.

MR. BOWERMAN: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can give the number of cattle returned as entering the markets at the places in England scheduled under The Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act, 1891, in each of the years 1902 to 1907, as published in Table LXIV., Agricultural Statistics, 1905.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The information desired will be found in the following Table—

Number of cattle returned as entering the markets at the places scheduled under The Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act, 1891, in each of the years 1902 to 1907:—

Places.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
England.						
Ashford . .	11,087	12,751	13,697	13,370	13,189	12,509
Birmingham .	24,076	19,333	16,157	13,560	10,374	9,669
Bristol . .	66,620	73,080	56,117	59,483	46,861	49,994
Carlisle . .	61,362	68,743	64,371	59,096	59,775	61,700
Leeds . .	33,564	35,784	34,182	33,772	34,441	36,205
Leicester . .	67,826	61,725	59,494	52,948	56,799	65,020
Lincoln . .	9,860	10,502	9,712	11,855	11,367	12,563
Liverpool . .	73,384	54,473	49,466	49,648	52,600	58,082
London . .	81,830	68,520	67,125	64,716	59,355	58,830
Newcastle-on-Tyne.	100,470	97,288	96,710	101,573	105,860	107,960
Norwich . .	115,387	124,199	121,829	116,763	118,790	123,252
Salford . .	115,061	105,626	99,257	103,962	107,584	108,671
Shrewsbury .	66,605	69,966	61,724	67,286	55,728	66,913
Wakefield .	70,667	74,773	67,675	71,580	57,586	58,790
York . .	112,316	120,384	87,141	73,004	67,289	53,223
Scotland.						
Aberdeen . .	50,405	47,757	53,916	62,115	63,595	59,416
Dundee . .	17,589	17,896	18,716	21,271	21,453	21,051
Edinburgh .	74,589	71,926	72,078	77,949	76,469	75,069
Falkirk* . .	11,747	11,383	11,142	—	—	—
Glasgow . .	76,487	60,550	57,000	64,832	65,375	78,386
Perth . .	61,669	55,642	60,208	115,688	118,990	114,198
England . .	1,010,115	997,147	904,657	892,617	857,598	883,381
Scotland . .	292,486	265,154	273,060	341,855	345,882	348,120
Total . .	1,302,601	1,262,301	1,177,717	1,234,472	1,203,480	1,231,501

* Under the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Returns Order of 1905, Falkirk is no longer scheduled as a place from which Returns are to be made.

MR. BOWERMAN: To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he can give the total numbers of cattle, differentiating between fat and store, returned by the market reporters of the Board and under The Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act, 1891, as entering the markets at places in England and Wales mentioned in Table LXXV., Agricultural Statistics, 1906, for each of the years 1902 to 1907.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The information desired will be found in the following Table—

Number of Cattle returned as entering the Markets at the above-mentioned Places in each of the years 1902 to 1907.

Places.		1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
England and Wales.							
Ashford -	Fat	11,087	12,751	13,697	6,920	7,052	6,772
	Store				6,450	6,137	5,737
Birmingham	Fat	24,076	19,333	16,157	8,310	6,840	5,999
	Store				5,250	3,534	3,670
Bridgnorth *	Fat	—	—	—	1,762	2,491	2,556
	Store				4,313	5,260	5,125
Bristol - -	Fat	66,620	73,080	56,117	11,671	10,273	12,190
	Store				47,812	36,588	37,804
Caerwys § -	Fat	—	—	—	96	199	204
	Store				3,923	4,044	3,262
Carlisle -	Fat	61,362	68,743	64,371	12,685	12,767	14,010
	Store				46,402	47,008	47,690
Chichester -	Fat	—	—	19,578	4,167	4,303	4,765
	Store				17,743	14,713	17,610
Corwen § -	Fat	—	—	—	356	282	340
	Store				3,517	3,444	2,796
Crewe - -	Fat	—	—	—	10,453	9,715	10,039
	Store				17,095	17,797	15,327
Darlington -	Fat	—	—	—	10,689	9,144	10,296
	Store				16,095	13,863	15,117
Denbigh § -	Fat	—	—	—	615	623	584
	Store				3,809	3,496	2,890

* Figures for the last ten months only of 1905.

§ The numbers at these places are those returned by the Market Reporters of the Board; the remainder are returned under The Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act, 1891.

Places.		1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
Derby § -	Fat	—	—	71,716	34,692	32,891	31,758
	Store				35,703	33,048	31,761
Dorchester § -	Fat	—	—	17,008	7,531	6,418	5,093
	Store				11,474	14,944	16,117
Exeter § -	Fat	—	—	17,106	5,906	5,664	4,796
	Store				10,428	11,401	13,428
Gateshead * -	Fat	—	—	—	7,596	12,844	12,997
	Store				13,545	19,084	20,447
Hereford -	Fat	—	—	—	13,557	16,269	17,494
	Store				25,699	23,822	24,138
Hull § - -	Fat	—	—	—	17,121	17,564	19,556
	Store				4,166	4,097	4,655
Ipswich § -	Fat	—	—	35,618	14,433	15,232	13,469
	Store				24,333	21,634	25,102
King's Lynn *	Fat	—	—	—	16,346	19,650	19,230
	Store				18,631	18,584	19,344
Leeds - -	Fat	33,564	35,784	34,182	32,928	34,087	35,834
	Store				844	354	371
Leicester -	Fat	67,826	61,725	59,494	29,730	31,716	34,283
	Store				23,218	25,083	30,737
Lincoln -	Fat	9,860	10,502	9,712	6,247	6,823	6,841
	Store				5,608	4,544	5,722
Liverpool -	Fat	73,384	54,473	49,466	47,733	49,682	55,228
	Store				1,915	2,918	2,854
London -	Fat	81,830	68,520	67,125	61,316	56,315	56,565
	Store				3,400	3,040	2,265
Newcastle -	Fat	100,470	97,288	96,710	100,936	105,460	103,375
	Store				610	400	4,585

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* Figures for the last ten months only of 1905.

§ The numbers at these places are those returned by the Market Reporters of the Board; the remainder are returned under The Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act, 1891.

Places.		1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
Newport § -	Fat	—	—	18,100	12,457	13,422	14,596
	Store				5,368	4,582	4,666
Northallerton *	Fat	—	—	—	8,688	10,265	12,970
	Store				315	323	1,207
Norwich -	Fat	115,387	124,199	121,829	29,686	31,269	33,096
	Store				88,077	87,521	90,156
Oswestry * -	Fat	—	—	—	11,374	13,977	13,934
	Store				14,853	16,581	18,587
Peterborough §	Fat	—	—	20,172	7,706	6,783	6,492
	Store				14,400	11,977	10,460
Ruthin § -	Fat	—	—	—	619	611	840
	Store				3,148	2,767	2,290
Salford -	Fat	115,061	105,626	99,257	102,495	106,503	107,137
	Store				1,468	1,081	1,534
Selby* -	Fat	—	—	—	3,456	4,517	4,720
	Store				1,218	1,316	1,239
Shifnal* -	Fat	—	—	—	2,112	2,956	3,525
	Store				356	354	391
Shrewsbury -	Fat	66,605	69,966	61,724	11,326	9,862	10,248
	Store				55,960	45,866	56,665
Stokesley* -	Fat	—	—	—	1,388	1,587	1,878
	Store				997	948	966
Truro ‡ § -	Fat	—	—	20,204	9,706	9,978	—
	Store				9,656	9,808	—
Wakefield -	Fat	70,667	74,773	67,675	60,737	47,892	50,547
	Store				10,843	9,694	8,243
Wellington*	Fat	—	—	—	11,868	14,850	16,092
	Store				5,183	6,880	7,645

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* Figures for the last ten months only of 1905.

‡ Returns were not received from Truro in 1907.

§ The numbers at these places are those returned by the Market Reporters of the Board; the remainder are returned under The Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act, 1891.

Places.		1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.
Wolverhampton*	Fat	—	—	—	24,215	28,940	30,438
	Store				2,860	3,247	3,379
York - -	Fat	112,316	120,384	87,141	11,981	12,629	13,348
	Store				61,023	54,660	39,875
Scotland.							
Aberdeen -	Fat	50,405	47,757	53,916	29,993	28,607	27,116
	Store				32,122	34,988	32,300
Ayr* - -	Fat	—	—	—	16,912	21,275	20,679
	Store				7,789	9,861	8,850
Castle Douglas	Fat	—	—	38,932	6,188	6,644	6,637
	Store				30,624	29,857	28,025
Dingwall * †	Fat	—	—	—	1,717	4,398	4,599
	Store				4,642	19,113	19,602
Dundee -	Fat	17,589	17,896	18,716	16,176	15,377	15,362
	Store				5,095	6,076	5,689
Edinburgh -	Fat	74,589	71,926	72,078	44,265	45,535	46,276
	Store				33,684	30,934	28,793
Elgin -	Fat	—	—	—	8,551	8,817	9,176
	Store				12,799	15,376	14,197
Glasgow -	Fat	76,487	60,550	57,000	64,728	65,261	78,386
	Store				104	114	—
Inverness § -	Fat	—	—	—	6,960	8,218	8,412
	Store				16,198	16,066	15,292
Perth - -	Fat	61,669	55,642	60,208	22,461	23,439	24,959
	Store				93,227	95,551	89,239
Stirling - -	Fat	—	—	58,510	13,575	14,343	14,329
	Store				53,876	52,917	46,435

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* Figures for the last ten months only of 1905.

† Figures in 1905 for one mart only.

§ The numbers at these places are those returned by the Market Reporters of the Board; the remainder are returned under The Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Act, 1891.

Supply of Hides.

MR. BOWERMAN: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the fact that the prices of hides, standard quality, has risen from 3¾d. per pound on 20th February last to 4½d. per pound on 14th May, the highest price since November 1907, notwithstanding an increase in imports of wet hides of 66,000 cwt. in the four months ended 30th April, 1908, compared with 1907, and that the number of live cattle imported from North America has decreased from 152,795 to 131,971 for the four months ended 30th April, 1907 and 1908 respectively; and whether he will take steps to facilitate the importation of more live cattle for slaughter at the foreign animals wharves, and so increase the supply of hides.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I understand that the prices quoted relate to the "best ox and heifer market hides," otherwise the facts are correctly stated in the first part of the Question. With regard to the second part, I have already informed my hon. friend that the Board of Agriculture are not prepared to modify their regulations with regard to the importation of live cattle.

Prosecutions under the Truck Act in Ulster.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the number of prosecutions for breach of the Truck Act which have taken place in Ulster during the present year and the number of cases in which convictions were secured; and also, whether he will direct the attention of the local inspectors to the necessity of strictly enforcing the provisions of the Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) Two cases for breaches of the Truck Acts have been taken in Ulster during the present year, the offence in each being the payment of wages otherwise than in current coin. One case was dismissed on the grounds that it was the first of the kind in the district and that no fraud was intended, the defendant being required to pay 2s. 6d. as costs. In the other case, in which four informations were laid, the defendant was convicted on one information and fined £5, and the other three were withdrawn on condition of defendant paying costs. The inspectors are fully alive to the necessity of strictly enforcing the provisions of the Acts, and have been giving considerable attention to the subject.

Upkeep of Irish Main Roads.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, having regard to the fact that Imperial grants are made for the upkeep of main roads in England and Wales to the amount of £250,000, and in Scotland to the amount of £35,000, and to the claim by Ireland to relief in this respect, whether the Government will appoint a Commission to inquire into the cost of roads, with a view to having all main roads kept up by Imperial funds.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) As at present advised I am not prepared to recommend the appointment of a Royal Commission with the object in question; but the subject is one to which I shall give careful attention.

Purchase of Estate of Mr. J. C. Hartnett, of Listowel.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether Mr. John Creagh Hartnett, of Listowel, has offered for sale to the Estates Commissioners his non-residential farm of about 200 acres of land situate at Moynsha, near Abbeyfeale, for division amongst the labourers and to enlarge uneconomic holdings; when was the farm inspected and reported upon; and whether any offer has yet been made to Mr. Hartnett, who is anxious to have this land divided amongst the poor of the district.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have, with Mr. Hartnett's consent, had a preliminary inspection made of the lands of Shanbally which are at present in his occupation, and they are about to intimate to Mr. Hartnett the price they would be prepared to offer for the lands if formal proceedings for sale were instituted and the existing land purchase annuity redeemed.

Burning of Shed of Mr. S. Comer at Williamstown.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that, on the 19th instant, a shed used for stabling and belonging to a Mr. S. Comer, national school teacher in Williamstown, County Galway, was saturated with paraffin oil and burnt down; and what action, if any, has been taken in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The fact is as stated. The shed was a small one, and the amount of the damage done is about £2. The police have carefully investigated the matter, but have not yet succeeded in obtaining evidence as to the offender.

Wexford County Council and Expenditure on Marine Works.

Mr. FFRENCH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Wexford County Council passed a resolution in favour of giving more extensive powers to county councils in the expenditure of money on marine works; and if the Government are prepared to act in the direction indicated by the resolution.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) My hon. friend the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture intends to introduce to-morrow the Navigation Works (Ireland) Bill, which will confer upon county councils extended powers as to expenditure upon marine works.

Mr. FFRENCH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Wexford County Council are willing to expend a reasonable sum of money for the improvement of Ballyhack Harbour, so as to render it safe for the fishermen's boats; whether this harbour is under the control of the Waterford Harbour Commissioners, who will not carry out the necessary work or facilitate the Wexford County Council to do so; and whether he can say in what way the Ballyhack fishermen can obtain redress.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Ballyhack Harbour is the property of, and under the control of, the Waterford Harbour Commissioners, by which body it was built at a cost of £2,667 in 1882. I have no information as to whether or not the Commissioners are willing to carry out the works required at Ballyhack which, I understand, consist mainly in dredging the mud by which the harbour is partially choked. I am not aware of any legal means by which the Commissioners could be compelled to join in the execution of works for the improvement of the harbour. It does not appear whether the fishermen have approached the Commissioners in the matter; if not, that would appear to be a proper course.

Ballymoney (Antrim) Girls' School.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state if the Commissioners of Irish National Education have placed the girls' department of Ballymoney, County Antrim, model school, at the disposal of private teachers of German and elocution; what rent these teachers are paying for the use of the said premises and the equipment and attendance which have been originally provided at the public expense; will the Board undertake to provide for the other teachers in the town and district the facilities in the way of fire, attendance of a servant, etc., as provided out of the public purse for this school; and whether the Board has sanctioned a special system of organisation for Ballymoney model school, girls' department, by which a junior and senior fifth standards are recognised, so that pupils who, in other schools, would be put in the sixth standard are placed in the model girls' school in the senior fifth standard.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that two special teachers are employed in the Ballymoney model school to give instruction in German and elocution on Saturdays to such pupils as desire it. No extra expenditure from public funds is incurred in connection with these classes, and no payment is made to the teachers, who are remunerated by small fees paid by the pupils. No rent is paid by the teachers. The Commissioners have no funds at their disposal out of which to provide fires, etc., such as are provided for model schools. No special system of organisation has been sanctioned for the Ballymoney girls' model school.

Belfast Public Abattoir.

Mr. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of

Ireland whether he is aware that the public abattoir in Belfast is a standing menance to the health of the city; that nine years ago a new abattoir was proposed and a loan of £30,000 for its construction sanctioned by the Local Government Board; but that, notwithstanding this, the corporation have not yet decided upon a site for the new abattoir; and whether, in view of these circumstances, the Local Government Board proposes to take any action in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Belfast Health Commission have reported unfavourably upon the situation of the abattoir and the insufficiency of its accommodation. A loan for a new abattoir was sanctioned nine years ago, but up to the present the corporation have not decided upon a site. The matter is one within the discretion of the corporation, and the Local Government Board have no power to compel them to provide a proper abattoir; but it may perhaps be anticipated that the recommendation of the Commission will induce the corporation to take action in the matter.

Refusal of Gun-Carriage for Funeral of Daniel Doran.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS (Manchester, N.W.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether the officer commanding the troops at Hulme Barracks, Manchester, refused the request for the use of a gun-carriage at the funeral of Daniel Doran, a veteran soldier; whether he is aware that Doran served in the 12th Foot through the New Zealand and the Afghan campaigns, and was, up to the time of his death, serving in the Corps of Commissionaires; and, if the refusal is in accordance with the regulations, will he consider the advisability of revising the regulations to meet such cases.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief concerned has been requested to furnish a Report on this matter.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Chatham Harbour.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is intended to increase the amount to be spent upon dredging Chatham harbours and approaches; and what is the amount intended to be spent during the current year.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The total expenditure on dredging at Chatham and on the Medway during the current year, is estimated at about £24,000. There will probably be some increase in the expenditure next year.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Will the dredging of the next two years be such as to facilitate the entrance of such ships as the "Dreadnought?"

MR. McKENNA: I should like notice of that Question. I do not anticipate that the dredging will be sufficient to enable the "Dreadnought" to come in.

The Territorial Artillery.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state whether any military experts have declared that the Territorial Artillery could be used for defence at once if the country was suddenly invaded.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): To begin with, let me remind the hon. Member that in the case he puts of sudden invasion, the Regular Artillery would be available for defence. If the Territorial Artillery receive the proper support and encouragement to which they are entitled from a patriotic country and are not discouraged by criticism which ought to have been made, if at all, last year, they would be able to play a very valuable part in the defence.

War Office Contracts.

MR. CARLILE (Hertfordshire, St. Albans): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the proportions of two-thirds of materials and stores supplied by private firms and one-third by the Royal Arsenal have been altered as a result of the reduced output at the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, under the Estimates for 1908–9; and, if so, for what reasons.

MR. HALDANE: If, as I gather is the case, the hon. Member is referring to the figures regarding expenditure within the Ordnance Factories Vote which I gave him on Monday last, he appears to be under some misapprehension. The great bulk of the expenditure in question is for raw material, which is necessarily obtained from the trade. The orders for Army services allocated between the factories and the trade, are of course paid for from Army Votes. The figures from the Ordnance Factory Vote which I gave last Monday are entirely distinct.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central): Does the right hon. Gentleman adhere to the former proportions—two-thirds to private firms, and one-third to Government workshops?

MR. HALDANE: We have not materially varied them.

MR. CARLILE: But have they not been modified as a result of the reduction of work at the Arsenal?

MR. HALDANE: I do not think so.

The New Hebrides—Liquor Traffic.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the provisions of the New Hebrides Convention with regard to the liquor traffic are being satisfactorily carried out; and, if not, what steps are being taken to enforce them.

THE UNDER - SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): Excepting a Press telegram which was published on the 19th instant, the Secretary of State has no ground for thinking that the provisions of the New Hebrides Convention with regard to the liquor traffic are not being satisfactorily carried out. As to that telegram, I may refer the hon. Member to the Answer which I gave to the hon. Member for Berwickshire on Monday last.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: When are the Commissioners likely to be appointed?

COLONEL SEELY: I cannot say exactly. I will inquire. The High Commissioner is proceeding to the islands in the course of a day or two.

Canada and the West Indies—Tariff Reduction Negotiations.

MR. LAMONT (Buteshire): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received from the Governments of any of the Colonies represented at the Inter-Colonial Conference at Barbados last January any communications regarding the resolutions then carried in favour of negotiations for a mutual reduction of tariffs between the Dominion of Canada on the one part and certain of the West Indian Colonies on the other; and whether the Home Government would, if approached by the Colonial Governments, be willing to appoint a representative to a further conference in order to assist them in bringing their negotiations to a successful issue.

COLONEL SEELY: The Answer to the first part of my hon. friend's Question is in the affirmative. To the second part, I am not in a position to give a definite answer at present. The principle of mutual reduction of tariffs between more or less contiguous parts of the Empire has long been recognised, and His Majesty's Government is anxious to give every encouragement to commercial intercourse between Canada, Newfoundland, and the West Indies; but the Secretary of State is not yet in full possession of the views of all the West Indian Governments on the subject; nor has he heard so far from the Dominion Government. The subject is—in details—one of much complexity, and I cannot hold out hope of being able to make a definite statement at any early date.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): May I ask whether in any arrangements to be made, care will be taken that Canada does not give more favourable treatment to the products of the West Indian Colonies than to those of Great Britain?

COLONEL SEELY: I will bear that in mind.

Dinizulu.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether for upwards of five months Dinizulu, a British subject, has been undergoing in Natal a preliminary examination on criminal charges which have never been definitely formulated; whether there is any other reason for this exceptional prolongation of these proceedings except that no evidence has been forthcoming upon which any definite charge can be based; and, if there is any other reason, whether the Secretary of State has been made aware what it is.

COLONEL SEELY: Dinizulu was arrested over five months ago and the preliminary examination is not yet concluded. His Majesty's Government regret the great length of this examination which they feel must inflict considerable hardship on the accused, but I should say that the Supreme Court recently observed when application was made to restrain the particular magistrate who has been taking the preliminary examination from sitting that "it must be remembered that the investigation is a very protracted and difficult one and complicated by circumstances of an unusual if not extraordinary character," and the application referred to was not itself based on the length of the proceedings but on charges of bias and discourtesy on the part of the magistrate. I will lay the judgment of the Supreme Court on this application on the Table.

MR MACKARNESS: What are the unusual and complicated circumstances alluded to?

COLONEL SEELY: The judgment of the Supreme Court will be contained in the Blue-book, which I hope to be able to lay on the Table to-morrow afternoon In that judgment my hon. friend will see the reasons, which are fully stated, for the undue prolongation of the trial.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): And after this long examination are we to get the names of the persons whom this chief is charged with having murdered?

COLONEL SEELY: I am afraid I can add nothing to my Answer. Under the law of Natal the charges are allowed to be somewhat vague, and it is not necessary to give names.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): Is it not a fact that a large number of documents have been discovered in the last few days relating to the trial of Dinizulu, and also a large amount of arms and ammunition?

COLONEL SEELY: I think it would be undesirable for me to make any statement on a case which is still *sub judice.*

MR. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.): I should like to know whether the Government have taken any steps to impress on the Government of Natal the necessity of expediting these proceedings, so as to put an end to the scandal which has led many persons to entertain a suspicion that the Government of Natal are only trying to trump up a charge against this man?

COLONEL SEELY: I cannot quite accept that statement. My hon. friend will see from the answer I gave that His Majesty's Government do feel acutely that the matter is one of some importance, and they are in communication with the Government of Natal on the subject.

MR. G. GREENWOOD (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that an application was recently made to the Supreme Court of Natal, on behalf of Dinizulu, that he should be allowed to see his legal advisers without the presence of officials; whether such application was successful; whether costs were asked for on the ground of his poverty owing to the stoppage of his salary as a Government induna; and whether his salary has been so stopped.

COLONEL SEELY: I have seen a Press telegram stating that an application of this kind was made to the Supreme Court and was successful as regards the main issue but not as regards the costs. The Secretary of State has telegraphed to ask whether it is true that Dinizulu's salary has been stopped, and is informed that this is so. He is still in communication with the Natal Government on the subject.

Mr. ALDEN (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he has received any further information as to when the preliminary examination of the chief Dinizulu is likely to be brought to a close; and whether, in the absence of any definite charge against him, the Secretary of State will take steps to secure that Dinizulu shall obtain the benefit of the promise made to him by the Imperial Government that he should remain an induna during good behaviour.

Colonel SEELY: No, Sir. I regret that I cannot say when the examination will be completed. Meanwhile I can assure my hon. friend that His Majesty's Government, as is shown by the correspondence recently laid, will not agree to Dinizulu's being deprived of the salary promised to him when he is returned to Zululand until the issue of the proceedings is known.

Northern Nigeria.

Mr. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, and, if so, when, he will lay before the House the Report by Sir Percy Girouard on the tenure and taxation of land values in Northern Nigeria.

Colonel SEELY: The questions dealt with in the Report have been referred to a Committee, under the Chairmanship of Sir Kenelm Digby, which has been specially constituted for the purpose. It is the intention of the Secretary of State to lay before Parliament the recommendations of the Committee, together with Sir Percy Girouard's Report, but it is not possible at present to say when this will be done.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: May I ask whether it comes within the terms of reference to this Committee to deal with the system of land tenure and taxation in other West Coast Colonies?

Colonel SEELY: I do not know; I will inquire.

Transvaal Committee on Unemployment.

Mr. WEDGWOOD: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Report of the Transvaal Committee on Unemployment which recommended the taxation of unworked mineral rights has yet been received in this country; and whether he proposes to lay it before the House.

Colonel SEELY: The Transvaal Indigency Commission Report has not been received at present, but the Governor has been asked to send copies as soon as they are available.

Portuguese Natives in the Transvaal Mines.

Sir GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the number of natives from Portuguese territory north of latitude 22 degrees employed on the Transvaal mines at the present time; and what was the rate of mortality of these natives during the year 1907, and for the first four months of this year.

Colonel SEELY: I cannot give later information than is contained in the recent Blue-book, Cd. 3993, but inquiry shall be made by next mail.

Sir GILBERT PARKER: In view of the figures quoted in the Blue-book, is the Government—bearing in mind their responsibility—making any representations to the Transvaal Government?

Colonel SEELY: The Secretary of State is keeping a very close watch on all these matters.

Sir GILBERT PARKER: But this is a very important Question, and——

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member should give notice of any important Question.

British Indians in the Transvaal.

Sir GILBERT PARKER: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Clause 128 of the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to prospecting and mining published in the Transvaal Government

Gazette on 30th March, which enacts that no coloured person shall be permitted to reside in proclaimed fields, except in bazaars, locations, mining compounds, and such other places as the mining commissioner may permit, is intended to apply to the Indian population; and whether, if the law is passed, all Indians, whatever their trade or occupation, would be required to reside in bazaars, locations, or mining compounds.

COLONEL SEELY: The Secretary of State is in communication with the Governor regarding the Bill, and pending his Report it is not possible for me to add anything to what I have already said on the subject.

Franco-Canadian Treaty of Commerce.

MR. CARLILE: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can give the full list of countries which will enjoy the most-favoured-nation treatment under the recently concluded Franco-Canadian treaty of commerce.

COLONEL SEELY: I understand that the following countries are entitled to most-favoured-nation treatment in Canada: Argentine Republic, Austria-Hungary, Bolivia, Colombia, Denmark, Japan, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Venezuela.

MR. CARLILE was understood to ask as to the special conditions laid down in the recently concluded Treaty.

COLONEL SEELY: I cannot answer that with regard to so many countries. I should like to have notice.

Chinese Mortality in the Transvaal Mines.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the death rate among the Chinese employed in the Transvaal mines and among the natives employed there, respectively, according to the latest Returns.

COLONEL SEELY: The death rate per 1,000 for the last quarter of last year was Chinese, 18·765; blacks, 28·612.

Trinidad Legislative Council.

MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can give the date of the appointment and re-appointment of each of the present unofficial members of the Legislative Council of the Colony of Trinidad; and whether it is the intention of the Government to continue their re-appointment as often as their term of office expires, or that a change will be instituted in the direction of having at least one Member on the council drawn from the ranks of the working class.

COLONEL SEELY: The information shall be furnished to the hon. Member. With regard to the second part of the Question, the Secretary of State cannot make any statement as to the future re-appointment of present unofficial members of the council on the expiration of their terms of office, and fears that any direct representation of the working class in the council would scarcely be practicable. My noble friend will, however, consult the officer administering the Government of the Colony on this point.

British Commercial Treaties.

MR. CARLILE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will give the official titles and dates of ratification of those treaties under which Great Britain enjoys most-favoured-nation treatment with countries in South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir EDWARD GREY): The information required by the hon. Member will be found in Commercial No. 3 (1907), which contains a Return of most-favoured-nation clauses in the treaties between Great Britain and foreign Powers in force on 1st January, 1907. (Cd. 3395.) Since that date, engagements have been entered into with Bulgaria, France, and Servia, which are contained in Treaty Series No. 1 (1908) (Cd. 3858), Treaty Series No. 7 (1908) (Cd. 3959), and Treaty Series No. 13 (1908) (Cd. 4078), respectively. The titles and dates of ratification of these treaties will be found in the

"Handbook of Treaties, etc., relating to Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Foreign Powers," which is in the Library of the House of Commons.

Workmen's Compensation and Insurance.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether action has been taken on the promise given by His Majesty's Government on several occasions during the discussion of the Workmen's Compensation Bill of 1906, that immediate general inquiry should be held into the best form in which to secure universal insurance to prevent the defeat of rights accruing under the law giving compensation for accidents.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): I said on the Second Reading of the Workmen's Compensation Bill on 4th April, 1906, that the Government believed the principle of compulsory insurance to be the right one, and the one which ought to be adopted as soon as practicable, and I intimated that an inquiry into the question would be undertaken without unnecessary delay. I do not depart in any way from that statement, but I consider that the inquiry is likely to be much more fruitful of useful results if it is deferred until we have fuller and more reliable information of the working of the present system than could now be obtained. As my right hon. friend is no doubt aware, I have already taken steps under Section 12 of the Act to obtain statistics of its working as regards the most important industries.

Receiving Homes for Aliens.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS (Manchester, N.W.): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in the event of the Port of London Bill passing into law this session, giving powers for the erection of receiving homes for alien immigrants at the port of London, he will introduce a short Bill to confer similar powers as regards receiving homes upon other port authorities in the United Kingdom.

MR. GLADSTONE: I beg to answer this Question on behalf of my right hon. friend. I can only repeat the Answer which I gave to the hon. Member for Darlington on the 6th of this month, that the circumstances which have rendered necessary a special statutory enactment in this matter as regards the port of London are peculiar to that port, and have not arisen elsewhere.

Bearing-Reins.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R, Thirsk): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what instructions the Metropolitan Police have to deal with cases of tight bearing-reins in the streets; and whether, in view of the discomfort and cruelty to horses involved in this practice, especially when waiting, he will give orders to the police to pay more attention to it than they do at present.

MR. GLADSTONE: No special instructions have been issued in respect of bearing-reins to the Metropolitan Police The police intervene in what appear to them to be obvious cases of cruelty, but the use of a bearing-rein is, of course, not necessarily cruel, and there would be great difficulty in satisfying a Court as to what degree of tightening of the rein aggravated discomfort into actual cruelty.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: As there are frequent cases which cause great offence to horse lovers, will the right hon. Gentleman give orders to the police to interfere?

MR. GLADSTONE: I will certainly call attention to it, though I have no reason to believe that the police neglect their duty in the matter.

Vitriol Throwing.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a recent case where a female prisoner, a few days after her release from prison, assaulted a wardress of the prison by throwing vitriol over her so as to blind her and also another woman who was sitting next to her; whether he is aware that this woman previous to her release from prison had uttered threats; what steps were taken by the police to guard against those threats being carried out; and whether he will take steps to make the purchase of vitriol more difficult.

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am aware of the case to which the noble Lord refers, and I need hardly say that it will have my most careful consideration, but while it is still awaiting trial, I am precluded from making any statement with regard to the actions of the accused, or the conduct of the police. Clause 5 of the Poisons and Pharmacy Bill, which is now under consideration in another place, proposes to put the sale of vitriol and similar substances under adequate restrictions.

Chief Constables.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many chief constables there are in England who have risen from the ranks in that profession; what class of men are preferred for the positions of head constables to those trained to the business; and if he will say why they are so preferred.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Chief constables are appointed by the local police authorities, of whom there are 190 in all, subject only in the case of county forces to the Secretary of State's approval. I am unable to say how many have risen from the ranks, but the number is, I believe, considerable.

Industrial Insurance.

Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the malpractices of agents employed by industrial insurance companies and of the large sums representing unclaimed policies and lapsed insurances which are now in the possession of these companies, he would appoint a Commission or a Committee to inquire into the question of industrial insurance with a view to its proper regulation.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): I can only refer my hon. friend to my reply to a Question asked me on this subject by the hon. Member for South Down on the 21st instant, of which, for his convenience, I am sending him a copy.

Unemployment Returns.

Mr. GOULDING (Worcester): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, seeing that his Department is unaware of any source of information enabling him to frame a statistical estimate of the numbers unemployed both among organised workers whose unions do not pay unemployed benefit, and also among unorganised and non-union workers, and seeing the importance of this information, he will take steps forthwith to devise a means of obtaining it, or appoint a Committee for the purpose.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I do not think a Committee on this subject could add to the information at present in the possession of the Department which has for several years been carefully and systematically studying the means of improving the statistics of unemployment. I understand that the question is also before the Royal Commission on Poor Law and Distress. If the hon. Member has any definite suggestions to offer, or if he wishes to obtain any explanation on particular points, the Board of Trade officials will always be happy to confer with him.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that during the *regime* of the last Government no reflection was cast by hon. Members on these Returns?

[No Answer was returned.]

Hop Substitutes in Beer.

Mr. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give information showing the proportion of hop substitutes used in particular parts of the country or in the largest breweries; and whether his Department has any powers whereby brewers who use substitutes in place of hops can be compelled to make known such use to the purchasers of beer, as in the case of certain groceries and other articles of consumption.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The hon. Member will find information as to the quantities of hop substitutes used in each county of the United Kingdom, and also as to the quantities used in breweries classified according to the number of barrels brewed, in the Return entitled Brewers' Licences (No. 32 of this session). The Board of Trade have no power to compel brewers to disclose to purchasers the nature of the materials they have used in brewing.

Mr. CLYNES: As the Board of Trade has no power at present, will steps be taken to acquire it?

Mr. CHURCHILL: That is a question of further legislation which should not be addressed to me.

Viscount HELMSLEY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this Government have refused to pass a Pure Beer Bill?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I believe I remember a debate on the subject.

Mr. COURTHOPE: I myself brought one in, and it was only defeated through the intervention of the Government.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The hon. Member is giving and not asking information.

Cycles as Railway Luggage.

Mr. CROOKS (Woolwich): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will consider the desirability of bringing the question of carrying cycles as luggage before the Conference now sitting on the subject of railway rates for goods, etc.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I must refer my hon. friend to my reply to a similar question asked by my hon. friend the Member for South West Ham on Thursday last.

Foreshore Dispute.

Mr. DALZIEL (Kirkcaldy Burghs): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is in a position to announce the decision at which his Department has arrived in regard to the foreshore dispute in which Sir Michael Nairn is concerned; and, if not, can he say how soon such decision is likely to be announced, having regard to the expressed local desire that the matter should be brought to a conclusion as speedily as possible.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The decision of the Board of Trade in this matter will be communicated to Sir Michael Nairn's legal advisers in the course of the next few days.

Port of London Bill—Receiving Homes for Aliens.

Mr. JOYNSON-HICKS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can now state what Amendments he proposes to move to the Port of London Bill for the purpose of erecting receiving homes for alien immigrants; and whether he proposes to make the erection of such receiving homes by the new London port authority mandatory or optional.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The form of any Amendments that may be required is under consideration; the effect will be to impose on the port authority the duty of making such provision for accommodation of alien passengers as the Secretary of State may think necessary.

*Mr. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End): Does the right hon. Gentleman suggest it should be made compulsory for the port authority to erect receiving homes? Will he see that such provision is made in all other ports at which aliens arrive—Grimsby, for instance—and will he see that in any Port or Harbour Bill that is brought in such accommodation in future is provided?

Mr. CHURCHILL: Consideration will be given to secure satisfactory arrangements being provided for the accommodation of aliens brought to any port. When Bills of this character are brought in will be the proper time for the Board of Trade to consider them.

Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): May I ask if, in view of the great expense of providing this accommodation for aliens, the right hon. Gentleman will consider the advisability of repealing the Aliens Bill?

Mr. CHURCHILL: My views on that Bill are well known.

Canadian Trade with Great Britain.

Mr. CARLILE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give the figures, in values and in quantities, of the imports of British silks and kindred manufactures into the Dominion of Canada yearly since 1897.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I will have a tatement of the total value of British silk manufactures imported into Canada printed in the Votes. No information as to total quantities is available.

Appended is the Statement—

> The following statement shows the value of British silk manufactures imported for Home consumption into the Dominion of Canada in each of the years ended 30th June, 1897–8 to 1906–7—

Years ended 30th June.	Value of Imports of Silk Manufactures.
	£
1898	268,000
1899	203,000
1900	146,000
1901	138,000
1902	145,000
1903	166,000
1904	170,000
1905	181,000
1906	177,000
1907	187,000

Lighthouse Keepers' Salaries.

Captain DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether any decision has yet been arrived at with regard to petitions for increase of salary presented to the general lighthouse authorities in Great Britain and Ireland some eighteen months ago by the light-keepers in their respective services; and, if not, can he state the cause of the delay that has occurred, in view of the promise made that the petitions should be considered.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I understand that last year petitions were presented to the general lighthouse authorities by the light-keepers in their respective services, and that about a year ago the petitioners were informed that it was inopportune to go into the matter pending the Report of the Royal Commission on Lighthouse Administration. I am informed that, the Royal Commission having now reported, the three general lighthouse authorities are considering the applications and propose to confer together at an early date on the subject.

Captain DONELAN: Is there any reason to hope they will receive favourable consideration?

Mr. CHURCHILL: I have no special reason to justify me in forecasting the result of the consideration.

Railway Men's Right of Combination.

Mr. HUDSON (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to a circular issued on 21st May, 1908, by the general manager of the Great Eastern Railway Company to the staff on the line and the Press; and whether, in view of the agreement entered into by Lord Claud Hamilton, chairman of that company, in November, 1907, and the Board of Trade, he proposes to take any action so that the men may not be prevented from exercising their rights of combination, and from taking advantage of the conciliation boards formed under the agreement referred to.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I have seen the circular in question. It does not appear to me to interfere in any way, and I am advised that it does not interfere in any way, with the operation of the agreement of the 6th November, or with the men's right of combination, or prevent them from taking advantage of the conciliation boards formed under the agreement.

Milk Bill.

Mr. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government

Board whether he can yet state when the Milk Bill will be introduced.

THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. MASTERMAN, West Ham, N.): My right hon. friend has asked me to say that a date cannot be fixed at present.

MR. COURTHOPE: Does the hon. Gentleman recollect——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has put his Question and got the Answer.

Motor Cars and Road Maintenance.

MR. CLYNES: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to the statement made at the last meeting of the Lancashire County Council that the estimates of the Main Roads Committee had increased by £13,152 owing, in part, to the heavy motor-car traffic; whether he has any information of similar increases in other parts of the country; and whether he can take any steps in support of measures to compel the owners of pleasure motor cars to pay towards the costs and repairs which they occasion.

MR. MASTERMAN: The attention of my right hon. friend has not been drawn to the particular statement referred to, but he has received communications from other sources respecting an increase in the cost of road maintenance said to be due in part to motor traffic. The point raised in the last part of the Question will receive consideration.

Public Health Act Orders.

MR. COURTHOPE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board when the orders authorising the adoption of the Public Health Act, 1907, will be issued.

MR. MASTERMAN: The Local Government Board have been in communication with a considerable number of local authorities with regard to cases under the Act. In several instances the statutory requirements have now been complied with, and the orders will, I hope, be issued at an early date. As regards others, communications are still proceeding.

Vaccination.

MR. LUPTON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board if he has caused an inquiry to be made as to the death of Doris Irene Leese from vaccination at Fenton on 9th March, 1908; and, if so, if he will lay the Report upon the Table of the House or submit a copy to the parent of the child, or permit some person authorised by the parent to inspect the Report.

MR. MASTERMAN: My right hon. friend has caused inquiry to be made as to this case. The death of the child appears to have been due to erysipelas and cellulitis caused by the poisoning of the arm; but the poisoning began too many days after the vaccination for it to be attributable to the vaccine lymph used. The report of the inspector is a confidential document. Hence the course suggested in the latter part of the Question could not be taken.

MR. LUPTON: Will the hon. Gentleman give reasons why he thinks this poisoning in the arm was not caused by vaccination?

MR. MASTERMAN: I think the reason has already been given. Poisoning occurred many days after.

MR. LUPTON: Does the hon. Gentleman suggest that the doctor when he certified that this death arose from poisoning by vaccination did not know what he was about?

[No Answer was returned.]

National Gallery Extension.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if, in view of the Milan disaster, resulting in serious loss of life, from the failure of the reinforced concrete, he intends still going on with the use of a similar system of construction at the National Gallery extensions and other buildings; and whether he will consider the advisability, in the national interest, of causing competitive and comparative tests to be made of the different systems of fire-resisting construction before proceeding further with the work.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): So far as my present information goes about the accident at Milan, there is nothing in it which makes me hesitate to employ the best systems of building in reinforced concrete both at the National Gallery and elsewhere. Tests of various forms of fire-resisting construction have been made by the British Fire Prevention Committee, and I do not see that any useful purpose will be served by repeating them.

SIR F. DIXON-HARTLAND: Is not the same system which was in use at Milan the one adopted in the case of the National Gallery?

MR. HARCOURT said he understood that the Milan accident occurred during the preliminary tests which were intended to disclose defects of construction.

Deptford Wharf.

MR. BOWERMAN (Deptford): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether any case of foot-and-mouth disease in Great Britain has ever been traced to the landing at the foreign animals wharf at Deptford of animals known to be infected with that disease.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): The reply is in the negative.

Imports of Hides.

MR. BOWERMAN: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if animals from infected countries are landed at Continental ports for slaughter, if the hides, skins, and offals in a raw state are sent to English markets, and if the vessels employed in the trade proceed direct to British ports to discharge cargo or reload; if he can state what precautions, if any, are taken by the Board to prevent the introduction into this country of diseases of animals through the importation of the hides, skins, offals, and meat, and through the landing of persons and cargo from off the vessels on to British soil; and if there has been brought to the notice of the Board any case of diseases of animals in Great Britain traced to infection attributed to any of the above possible causes.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: A trade such as that to which my hon. friend refers exists as regards animals brought from Argentina to Belgium. All vessels engaged in that trade are required to be disinfected to the satisfaction of officers of the Belgian Government immediately after the landing of animals and before leaving the Belgian port. No outbreak of disease in this country has circumstantially been traced to the importation of hides, offals, etc., and the adoption of precautionary measures in relation to them has frequently been considered, but it has always been held to be impracticable.

Cycles on the Cornish Express.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the Great Western Railway Company, in defiance of their statutory obligations, refused to carry bicycles as excess luggage by the two daily Cornish express trains from 13th to 26th April, 1908, inclusive; and whether he will give instructions for separate accounts to be kept for passenger fares received by such trains, with a view to refusing a certificate of exemption from passenger duty on the third-class passenger receipts.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): I have no information as regards the first part of the Question. The exemption in favour of fares not exceeding a penny a mile is statutory and I have no power to withhold it.

Irish Local Government Board—Additional Auditor.

MR. HAZLETON (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland who is the additional auditor under the Local Government Board appointed in April, 1907, and why was this extra office created; what qualifications for the office has the person appointed; on whose recommendation was he appointed; and is he a member or associate of the Chartered Accountants' Society of Ireland.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange): The additional auditor appointed in 1907 is Mr. R. J. Baker, who is described in this year's Estimates as "Junior Auditor (Temporary)." This temporary office was created in order to meet arrears of work. Mr. Baker, who was selected by the Local Government Board for the post, was one of the Board's audit clerks on the permanent staff of the office. He is an associate of the Corporation of Accountants.

Irish Local Government Board—Remuneration of Mr. A. D. Price.

MR. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the amount of the credit which Mr. A. D. Price, of the Local Government Board, has received for his eight years unbroken temporary service; whether he applied for such credit, and on whose recommendation it was made; whether such credit was paid to him before being included in the Estimates; and whether it was in addition to the new increase, provided in the current Estimates, of this gentleman's salary from a maximum of £400 to a minimum of £400 rising to £600.

MR. CHERRY: It would be difficult to appraise the exact cash value of the credit given for Mr. Price's temporary service. It will, perhaps, suffice if I inform the hon. Member of the precise facts. In January, 1907, the office which Mr. Price holds was made permanent at a scale of salary rising from £400 to £600 a year. Mr. Price asked to be given credit for his temporary service, and the Local Government Board recommended the application. The Treasury, upon consideration of the facts, gave authority for Mr. Price to enter on the new scale at his existing salary, namely, £500, which was the salary attached to the post while it was a temporary appointment. This authority was given on 5th February, 1907, after the Estimates for last year had been prepared.

Irish Local Government Board—Assistant Clerk in Charge of Accounts.

MR. HAZLETON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the increase of the salary of the assistant clerk in charge of accounts under the Local Government Board from a maximum of £200 to £250 rising to £350 a year is a permanent increase; and whether, in view of the fact that the increase of work under the Labourers Act, which is the ground of the increase, is only temporary, he will see that the normal scale of salary of £200 a year is reverted to when the extra work under the Labourers Act comes to an end.

I beg also to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the change in the maximum salary of the clerk in charge of accounts under the Local Government Board from £450 to £500, in consequence of the increase of work and responsibility due to the passing of the Labourers Act, is a permanent increase upon the Estimates; whether the increase of work and responsibility due to the passing of the Labourers Act is only temporary; and if so, can he explain why the salary of this office has been permanently increased merely because of a temporary increase of work.

MR. CHERRY: The increased salaries of the clerk in charge of accounts and assistant clerk in charge of accounts are intended to be permanent, seeing that the increased work and responsibility of these officers due to the passing of the Labourers Act will be to all intents and purposes permanent. The financial transactions under that Act will not terminate for sixty-eight and a half years, and the hon. Member will scarcely expect me to make any promise as to the reduction of the salaries at the end of that period.

Irish National Education Board Secretaries.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the two secretaries of the National Education Board have any authority over the two chief inspectors, or the latter over the former; and, if so, to what extent in either case; who is the immediate official superior of each of the four officers in question; and how many of them and which are now sixty years of age and over, and so liable to be called on to retire by the head of the Department, should he for any reason think fit to do so.

MR. CHERRY: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that their instructions to the chief inspectors are conveyed through the secretaries, but the secretaries have no authority over the chief inspectors, nor the chief inspectors over the secretaries. The Resident Commissioner is the official superior of all four officers. One of the chief inspectors is over 60 years of age.

Irish Prison Doctors.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether prison doctors in Ireland are entitled to pensions under their original appointments; whether recently this right has been defeated by the appointments being made for three years only, with the result of depriving prison doctors of their independence by compelling them to rely on executive favour for their continuance in office; whether prison doctors are frequently called on to decide as between prisoners and gaolers on matters of health and treatment, so that the office is one peculiarly requiring permanency of tenure unless misconduct is proved; and was it at the instance of the Treasury that the Irish Government reduced the *status* of prison medical officers.

MR. CHERRY: Prior to 1877 the Prison Medical Officers in Ireland were entitled to pension under the Acts then in force, but since the passing of the Prisons (Ireland) Act, 1877, only those medical officers who are members of the established Civil Service and give their whole time to the service are entitled to pension. The only officers so entitled are two at Mountjoy Prison and one at Maryborough. Two of the existing medical officers of local prisons who were appointed before 1877 are also entitled to pension. The remainder of the prison doctors are local medical men who have private practice. The fact that they are appointed for temporary terms of three years does not affect the question of pension, which depends upon the established principle that those persons only who devote their whole time to the service of the State are entitled to pensions. The Government are not aware of any instance in which prison doctors have been called upon to decide as between prisoners and gaolers in matters of health and treatment, and there is, I am informed, no ground for the assumption that these officers are not fully independent in the discharge of their duties. No case has yet occurred in which the temporary appointment has not been renewed at the expiration of the term of three years. The change in the *status* of medical officers as regards pension was not made by any Government Department, but, as I have indicated, by statute.

Leader Estate Evicted Tenants.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state whether the Estates Commissioners have yet been able to give consideration to the case of Mrs. Alice Nagle, an evicted tenant on the Leader estate, Cork County, consequent upon the report of one of their inspectors who has recently inquired into all the circumstances; and whether the Commissioners will endeavour to induce the present occupier of the farm to give up possession thereof on receiving an equivalent holding elsewhere and due compensation, or, failing such an arrangement, if the Commissioners will exercise such powers as they possess to effect the reinstatement of Mrs. Nagle.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have now received their inspector's report on this case, and will consider it in due course, regard being had to the many other cases which are awaiting their consideration.

Rathkeale School Teacher.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the fact that, owing to the age rule, Miss Mary O'Neill, who acted as industrial teacher in St. Anne's Convent National School, at Rathkeale, at a salary of £20 per annum, which was her main support, is now obliged to retire after a period of forty years service, he will press on the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland the necessity and justice of giving her a retiring allowance to maintain her in her old age.

MR. CHERRY: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that Miss O'Neill was not trained or classed as a national school teacher, and had never given service as such. She was an industrial teacher in St. Anne's Convent School. The Commissioners have no power to award retiring allowances in such cases.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that this lady is now compelled to fall back on the rates? Cannot we press the Commissioners to give her a retiring allowance?

MR. CHERRY: I am sorry to hear what the hon. Member says, but the Commissioners have no legal power to grant an allowance in her case.

Kelly Estate, Ballinasloe.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have purchased the Kelly estate, situate at Ballycrissane, Ballinasloe, County Galway.

MR. CHERRY: The Estates Commissioners have made a provisional offer for this estate, which the owner has signified her willingness to accept. Formal proceedings for the sale to the Commissioners are being instituted accordingly.

Clare Mortgage Dispute.

MR. HALPIN (Clare, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware of the fact that Sergeant Moynihan of Carrigaholt, County Clare, was present when Mrs. John Maguire, of Kiltrellig, was beaten and knocked down by John Haier; will he explain why Sergeant Moynihan did not prevent this outrage; and whether he is aware that this sergeant encourages such conduct on the part of men like John Haier.

MR. CHERRY: I am informed that Mr. Martin Haier recently foreclosed a mortgage on John Maguire's farm, and is now in legal possession of it. On the occasion in question Maguire and his wife persistently attempted by force to prevent Haier from putting cattle on the farm, and threatened him with sticks. Police-Sergeant Moynihan, who was present, arrested the Maguires in order to prevent a further breach of the peace, and both were subsequently bound over to keep the peace. It is not the case that Haier assaulted Mrs. Maguire. The police authorities are satisfied that the sergeant properly performed his duty on the occasion.

Irish Land Stock.

MR. KETTLE (Tyrone, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, what is the present rate of accumulation of the Sinking Funds provided under the Irish Land Purchase Acts of 1885, 1887–9, and 1891; and whether this rate is varied by Treasury rule in accordance with the variations of the money market.

MR. HOBHOUSE: Advances under the Land Purchase Acts of 1885 and 1887–9 are repayable by an annuity of £4 per cent. for forty-nine years, corresponding to a rate of accumulation of 3½ per cent. This rate is not subject to variation. Advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1891, were made in 2¾ per cent. Guaranteed Land Stock, and are repayable by an annuity of £4 per cent., of which £2 15s. per cent. is required for interest on the Stock, and the balance of £1 5s. is accumulated for the purpose of replacing the Stock. The rate of accumulation is based upon the actual price at which the Stock can be purchased; and under the Treasury Rules the rate varies from time to time so as to give the tenant purchasers the full benefit of the variations in the market price of the Stock. The average rate of accumulation at the present time is approximately £2 19s. 5d. per cent.

Mr. FLYNN: Have not the Treasury made a considerable profit by investing the Sinking Fund in the depreciated Land Stock?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I think they have made a small profit—not a considerable one.

Mr. MOONEY (Newry): Will the profit go to the credit of the Irish Land Stock?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: That is a difficult Question to answer. There is the possibility if the Stock rises in price that a loss will fall on the Treasury.

Mr. MOONEY: Yes, but the loss is falling on the Irish ratepayers at present.

Carlisle Pier, Kingstown.

Mr. MOONEY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what payment, if any, is being made to the Treasury by the London and North-Western Railway Company for the use of the Carlisle Pier, Kingstown Harbour.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: The question of the dues to be charged for the use of Kingstown Harbour is still under consideration.

Mr. MOONEY: Are we to understand that from 1st April last the London and North-Western Railway Company have been using this pier free of charge?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: No, but there has been a very small charge.

Mr. MOONEY: Did not the hon. Gentleman's predecessor say that the company should be charged the same as the City of Dublin Company? Have not the Commission of Kingston Harbour stated that they only intend to charge the London and North-Western Railway Company 5s. per trip or about £150 a year, while the City of Dublin pay £2,000 annually, and why was this preferential tariff given to an English company?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: All these points will be borne in mind in considering this question.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Was not Lord Stalbridge, the chairman of the London and North-Western Railway Company, at one time chief Treasury Whip in this House?

[No Answer was returned.]

Whisky Export Allowance.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a bonus is now paid by the State, or a rebate of duty given, on the export of whisky from this country; and, if so, will he say how much it is.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Lloyd-George, Carnarvon Boroughs): The export allowance on whisky is 3d. per gallon. If my hon. friend desires information with regard to the complicated questions connected with this allowance, I would refer him to Appendix I. to the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Industrial Alcohol Committee in 1905 [Cd. 2477 of 1905].

Duty Rebates.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, when the corn tax was removed by the late Government, rebate was given to all who had paid duty on corn and corn products of the value of £100 and upwards, if these were in store; and, if so, will he say why the same system is not adopted by him in dealing with sugar.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: When the corn duties were abolished in 1903, a rebate was allowed on stocks upon which not less than £25 duty had been paid. That rebate was, however, granted to meet exceptional circumstances, which do not arise in the case of sugar. On no other occasion of the reduction or abolition of a Customs duty in the past forty years has a general rebate on stocks in hand been allowed.

The Lord Chancellor's Department.

Mr. HENRY (Shropshire, Wellington): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he could make arrangements that Members might have the opportunity to be answered by a Member of the Government in this House Questions relative to matters which are under the jurisdiction of the

Lord Chancellor, and upon which Members of this House may be entitled to information.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (for Mr. Asquith): The existing arrangements are, in the opinion of my right hon. friend, quite adequate for supplying information to hon. Members in this House relating to matters within the jurisdiction of the Lord Chancellor; but if my hon. friend will bring to the notice of my right hon. friend the Prime Minister any flaws in their working, he will be glad to consider his representations.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL pointed out that the House had no power at present to discuss the action of the Lord Chancellor in regard to the appointment of magistrates, and the retention or removal of County Court Judges.

Excise Staff and Old-Age Pensions.

Mr. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if the substitution of the work in connection with old-age pensions will be an equivalent for the present work of the Excise officers in connection with establishment licences so far as actual work is concerned; and whether it is expected that no reduction of staff will result from the change.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (for Mr. Asquith): Until the arrangements in connection with the old-age pension scheme are in working order, it is impossible to say whether any reduction of staff will result from the change.

Excise and Customs Staff.

Mr. SNOWDEN: I beg to ask the Prime Minister when the proposed transfer of the Excise to the Customs is to take effect, and if the respective departments have made any calculations as to the effect of the transfer on the number of the Excise outdoor staff and of the Customs staff; and, if so, is the result expected to be an increase or decrease in the respective staffs, and to what extent.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE (for Mr. Asquith): The proposed transfer of the Excise to the Board of Customs cannot take effect until the necessary administrative arrangements have been completed, and this will take some time. It is impossible at present to fix a date for the transfer, or to say what the effect will be on the respective staffs thereafter.

Irish Land Purchase Finance.

Mr. KETTLE: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether in view of the importance and urgency of the subject and the need that all relevant information should be at the disposal of Members of the House, he will now direct publication of the evidence taken before the Departmental Committee of the Treasury which inquired into the financial difficulties which have arisen in connection with the Irish Land Purchase Act of 1903.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Prime Minister on the 28th ultimo to a similar question addressed to him by the hon. Member for Cambridge University.

The King's Visit to Russia.

Mr. ARTHUR HENDERSON (Durham, Barnard Castle) asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on behalf of the Prime Minister, a question of which he had given private notice—namely, whether, in view of the fact that the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone had on the Order Paper a Motion that would prevent the hon. Member for East Leeds carrying out the suggestion of Mr. Speaker of raising the question of the Royal visit to Russia on the Motion for the Whitsuntide Adjournment, he would agree to take the Foreign Office Vote on Thursday week.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: The Government, of course, very much regret that a notice of that kind should be placed on the Order Paper, and, unless the noble Lord sees his way to withdraw it, my hon. friend may depend upon it that some opportunity will be found enabling the matter to be discussed, probably to-morrow week. It may be that the Foreign Office Vote will be put down just for a short time to enable a discussion to be raised.

Lord R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): I do not know whether the House will allow me to say a few words [MINISTERIAL and LABOUR Cries of "No" and "Withdraw."] I am entirely in the hands of the House. If the House will allow me, what I wish to say is that I have no desire to stand in the way of the hon. Member's raising a discussion on this question. It is a question of great importance, no doubt, and, though I do not take the same view as the hon. Member, eminently fitted for discussion in this House. I only put the notice on the Paper—I say it quite frankly—in order to call attention to the continued neglect of the Government to provide against the abuse of this rule, and I venture to hope that the Government will now see how very inconvenient it is that this rule should be continuously departed from.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL asked the Speaker whether, seeing that it was only within the last three years that this rule had been extended so as to apply to Motions for adjournment over Easter and Whitsuntide, it would not be within his jurisdiction and discretion, yielding to the sense of the House, to confine its application to those Motions to which it was first applied.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Whatever the practice may have been originally, I take it that during the last few years the "blocking" Motion has been made effective upon Motions for adjournment over the holidays. I must refer the hon. Member to the Report of the Committee which sat on the subject last year.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I would remind the noble Lord that the Government have placed on the Order Paper a Motion dealing with this question, and that it has been blocked from his own side of the House.

Lord R. CECIL: And you have never given the House the slightest opportunity of discussing it.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: The late Prime Minister indicated that it was a Motion he was quite prepared to place on the Paper if it were adopted unanimously by the House. His Government understood that there was a unanimous feeling on both sides of the House, and I should have thought that this "blocking" Motion might have been withdrawn. Then this kind of experience would not have been repeated.

Lord R. CECIL: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will consult with the Prime Minister as to the desirability of putting this Motion down on some date as first order, on the understanding that, unless it is adopted within a short period of time, the debate would be adjourned.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I will convey that suggestion to the Prime Minister.

DEFENCE OF THE COUNTRY.

Mr. HUNT: In view of the unsatisfactory answer of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, to my Question concerning the Territorial artillery, I ask leave to move the adjournment of the House on a matter of urgent national importance—namely, that it is absolutely necessary that there should be in this country a sufficient force of Regular artillery instantly ready to be put into fighting line with the infantry and mounted infantry of the Auxiliary or Territorial Force, and that the country is not safe now, and never will be, until every sound man is available for defence.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: I think the proposal of the hon. Member errs in two respects. First of all, it is not definite and embraces far too many subjects; secondly, it can hardly be called urgent, because I presume there will be no invasion before Whitsuntide.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Committee of Selection that they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee A (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill): Colonel Seely; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Access to Mountains Bill): Sir John Dewar.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Fourth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

NEW BILL.

PREVENTION OF CRIME.

*The **SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT** (Mr. Gladstone, Leeds, W.): In asking leave to introduce this Bill, I wish to lay strong emphasis on the fact that civilised countries are paying special attention to the prevention of crime rather than to its punishment. The Bill which I wish to submit is in two parts—the first establishes State reformatories, the second proposes more effective methods of dealing with criminals who wilfully persist in crime. Following upon the Probation Act and the Children Bill introduced this session, the first part of the Bill is the completion of a definite scheme for dealing with young offenders up to the age of twenty-one years or even a higher age. It is proposed by the Bill to establish the Borstal system formally by law, and the proposed State reformatories will be known as Borstal institutions. When a young person is convicted on indictment the Court has power to sentence him to not less than one year and not more than three years in a Borstal institution; but difficulty has arisen under the tentative system, because Courts could not have full knowledge of the main characteristics of an offender or of his fitness for the special treatment and training provided in such an institution. The Bill provides, therefore, that Courts shall pronounce alternative sentences of penal servitude or imprisonment, so that if it is clearly evident that the subject of the sentence is not fit for the Borstal treatment, then the alternative system may come into force. The age under the Bill ranges from sixteen to twenty-one years, and power is given to the Secretary of State in certain cases to extend that age, and powers are also given to the Secretary of State and to the Prison Commissioners to transfer prisoners from prison to the Borstal Institution, either for the whole or for part of the sentence. There is also power to acquire land, to erect buildings, and to make regulations. Power is given to the Secretary of State in the case of incorrigibles to commute the unexpired residue of the Borstal detention to a term of imprisonment in no case exceeding the unexpired residue. On the other hand the Secretary of State is to have power after six months Borstal detention to release on licence and on probation, if the character of the prisoner seems to deserve it. These are the main provisions of Part I. of the Bill, and they are, I hope, thoroughly non-contentious. But now I come to the second part, which, undoubtedly, raises a new question, on which there may be genuine and, perhaps, strong differences of opinion. But the proposals are the outcome of careful study and long consideration. A Court, on the finding of a jury, is to have power to sentence an habitual criminal to a term of preventive detention, which will continue until the man gives *bona fide* and sufficient assurance that he will take to an honest life, or until by age or infirmity he becomes physically incapable of resuming a life of crime. In no case, therefore, is life imprisonment contemplated, and I wish to direct attention to the fact that it will be open to any man to secure his discharge on reasonable conditions. What is the general reason of this change in the law? The present system is sufficiently deterrent to 50 or 60 per cent. of prisoners; but it is not deterrent to two classes. The first of these is that class which is a nuisance rather than a danger to the State, those who are criminals chiefly because of physical or mental deficiency rather than by reason of a settled intention to pursue a life of crime. For that class the present system is not the right one. I am not in a position to deal with that large subject at the moment; but I hope before long a new and more appropriate system will be set up for those persons. A second and far smaller class of prisoners consists of more formidable offenders, men who are physically fit, who take to crime by preference, decline work when it is offered them, and refuse the helping hand. They laugh at the present system of imprisonment; and when they leave prison it is practically certain that they will return sooner or later. Speaking generally, men belonging to this class when in prison are excellently behaved; they are orthodox worshippers in chapel, and in many cases are regular attendants at Communion. Let me present one object lesson to the House. Every night 8,000 police march from the stations to their beats in the Metropolis. That large number is needed because there are at large in London some hundreds of potential housebreakers, whose avowed and known object is plunder. There are, perhaps, in some of the suburban districts fifty policemen watching, possibly, for one burglar. For each man caught the whole machinery for detection and punishment has to be set in motion and at great expense—the expense of detection, arrest, summary proceedings, trial, conveyance in custody, and, at last, imprisonment. For these men the present system of punishment is little better than a farce. The Government propose that, when a person is convicted on indictment of a crime and is sentenced to penal servitude, if the jury find, as a fact, that he is an habitual criminal, the Court may pass a further sentence, but they must first be satisfied that, by reason of his criminal antecedents and his mode of life, it is expedient for the protection of the public that he should be kept in detention for a longer period. The charge, therefore, has to be separately stated in the indictment, and the jury will have to be satisfied, first, that the man just convicted of an offence has been convicted of at least three serious crimes, and, secondly, that when convicted he was persistently leading an habitually dishonest life. That charge of habitualism cannot be made except by the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions. The main reason for this is the necessity for a close and accurate scrutiny as to whether a man's criminal record *prima facie* justifies the charge. With regard to the definition of crime, we take it from the Prevention of Crimes Act, 1871. The man will have an unqualified right of appeal. After serving his term of penal servitude he will be committed to a place of detention, and that will be a prison specially adapted for the purposes of the Bill, situated in the Isle of Wight, about half a mile distant from Parkhurst Prison. We propose that the prison discipline should be less rigorous than that now prevailing, alike as regards hours, talking, recreative occupations, and food. Under the rules a man by good conduct will be able to rise to a privileged class. He will have regular work within the precints of the prison, and he will be able to earn wages. He will not be there as a hopeless offender, but from the first every effort will be made to reclaim him. Now I come to the all-important point, and that is: How will the fitness for discharge be determined? This is what we propose. First of all, there will be the general supervision of the directors, who will report regularly to the Secretary of State as regards a man's conduct and industry, and there will be the general supervision of the Secretary of State himself. Secondly, there will be a board of visitors to hear complaints and investigate grievances. Thirdly, we propose to establish a special committee to consider individual cases at regular intervals. The committee will consist of the Governor, some members of the board of visitors, and any other members it is thought necessary to add. There will be at least two statutory meetings per annum of this committee for the purpose of reporting to the Secretary of State on the individual cases of those under detention. That is what we propose, but I agree that the House may probably wish to be satisfied that no man will be kept in prison subject only to official supervision, and I am ready within reason to consider any proposal which will meet the wishes of the House on that subject; but I would also impress upon hon. Members that my intention in proposing this Bill is that, while the system is for the prevention of crime, it is also to be used for the reclamation of even the very worst offenders. The House will observe that before a man enters on his detention period we have these safeguards: first, the Public Prosecutor; secondly, the jury; thirdly, the view of the Judge; fourthly, the Court of Criminal Appeal; fifthly, the Secretary of State. After conviction we have, first, the constant supervision of the Secretary of State; secondly, the reports and recommendations of the prison authorities; thirdly, the routine inspection by the board of visitors; fourthly, the special committee to report at least twice a year as to those under detention. These are the principal provisions. Hope and not fear is the best antidote to criminal habits. A man will not lose hope, and men would not be allowed to lose hope when they entered this place of detention. The system we are proposing differs absolutely from the present penal system of long and inevitable periods of detention, for it enables a man to effect his own release. No doubt discharges must be to some extent experimental, but any proved and serious breach of the conditions of the licence will mean arrest and return to the place of detention. We do not anticipate that the mere withdrawal of habitual criminals will achieve our object or will have a sensible influence on crime. We attach far more importance to the deterrent effect of the powers given by this Bill. Men of this class for whose benefit this Bill is designed are usually skilled and competent, and, if they think fit, they will have no difficulty in earning an honest livelihood. Our object is to prove to these men that a life of crime will not pay, and that such a life can only end in detention involving hard work and loss of liberty. If I am told that this is a new departure, my reply is that it is a necessary consequence of the wiser and more humane treatment now being adopted for the benefit of prisoners generally. We have reached a point at which the present prison treatment does not deter those who are attracted by, and deliberately take up, a life of crime. If the Bill provides severer treatment for a small minority of prisoners, it is at the same time a guarantee for the continuance of progressive improvement in our prisons for the benefit of the large majority of the inmates. In presenting this scheme to the House I make no apology for the introduction of a new principle in our penal system. On the contrary, I believe that in this principle and in the extension of it will be found the solution of some of the most difficult problems in the treatment of crime. The prevention of crime through reforming agencies underlies the establishment of State reformatories, and the same method, adapted to different circumstances, is the basis, and, I submit, the true justification, of preventive detention. I ask leave to introduce this Bill.

MR. EUGENE WASON (Clackmannan and Kinross): Will the right hon. Gentleman say if this Bill applies to Scotland?

***MR. GLADSTONE**: Yes, Sir, as regards Part I.

Motion made, and Question, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for that purpose to provide for the reformation of young offenders and the prolonged detention of habitual criminals; and for other purposes incidental thereto"—put, and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Secretary Gladstone, Mr. Attorney-General, and Mr. Herbert Samuel.

PREVENTION OF CRIME BILL.

"To make better provision for the Prevention of Crime, and for that purpose to provide for the reformation of young offenders and the prolonged detention of habitual criminals; and for other purposes incidental thereto," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time To-morrow, and to be printed. [Bill 242.]

OLD-AGE PENSIONS (EXPENSES).

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[MR. EMMOTT (Oldham) in the Chair.]

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (MR. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): This is a purely formal Resolution in order to enable us to introduce the Bill. The Prime Minister, I think, in his speech last week, said that the Bill would be circulated and printed and that it might be in the hands of Members this week; but that cannot be done until this formal Resolution has been concluded in the House of Commons. Therefore I trust that the right hon. Gentleman and his supporters will help us to get this formal Resolution through in order to enable Members to get a copy of the Bill at the earliest possible opportunity.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That it is expedient to provide for Old-age Pensions, and to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any Expenses incurred for that purpose and connected therewith."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

*MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbledon): I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that I wish to do nothing whatever which could be regarded even for a moment as endeavouring to obstruct this measure, and still less to retard the time when we shall have the Bill in our hands. I was going to make a suggestion which I think will be for the general convenience of the House, and that is that this Resolution might have been postponed until we had an opportunity of seeing the Bill. I do not quite understand from the right hon. Gentleman whether the passing of this Resolution is a necessary preliminary or not to the introduction of the Bill.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am advised so.

*MR. CHAPLIN: I have grave doubts on the subject, but if the right hon. Gentleman says it is so I have no more to say. The Resolution is a very broad one, and I am going to ask one or two questions with regard to it. I do not know whether there is anything in the Orders of the House to prevent it, but I think it would be a great convenience if such Resolutions were printed in the Order Paper. I hope the practice may be adopted in the future. We are told that the Resolution covers all the expenses connected with the scheme of the Prime Minister, and that the cost of the scheme is to be £6,000,000. Am I right in supposing that this Resolution covers the whole of that sum, and does it include the expenses of administration? As far as I know, it is a novel precedent to introduce a large measure of this kind into the House of Commons, involving immense expenditure without some information as to the sources from which the money is to come. But we have been told nothing, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman, if he can, before the Resolution is passed, will give us information at any rate as to the sources from which the expenses necessary under the terms of the Resolution are to be provided. Of course everybody knows that the great difficulty in connection with the provision of any scheme for old-age pensions has always hitherto been this: Where is the money to come from, and how is it to be provided? At first sight, I admit that when the right hon. Gentleman introduced the Budget, it did appear a remarkable feat that the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer should have been able not only largely to reduce taxation, but to provide for a scheme of old-age pensions at one and the same time; although it is true that he had enjoyed unusual facilities, and occupied a most exceptional position for carrying a measure of this kind and of providing the means for it. But that is exactly what the right hon. Gentleman has not done. If I understood his speech aright he proposed, it is true, to provide a very small sum, perhaps something like a fourth of the cost of the scheme, during the current financial year, but as to the rest of his scheme, he has made no provisions at all; he has left it as a legacy to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I do not at all envy the right hon. Gentleman, having regard to the enormous liabilities which the Government are heaping up for themselves, and by which of course the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be confronted when he has to frame his Budget. It is upon these various points, without desiring in the slightest to offer any obstructive opposition to this measure, that I think we are entitled to have some information from the right hon. Gentleman.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The right hon. Gentleman has asked me to enter upon a very wide field of inquiry and discussion. He wants me to give a financial statement to the House not merely as to the expense of this scheme but as to the sources from which the Exchequer is likely to be able to raise the necessary funds to meet that expenditure. It is not merely an explanation of the whole scheme of old-age pensions he asks for, but it is also an explanation of next year's Budget.

*MR. CHAPLIN: I have asked for no information except upon points which arise directly and distinctly out of the Resolution which has just been moved.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: I think that the right hon. Gentleman has gone a little beyond that. He asked me to explain to the House how we propose to raise the necessary funds to provide for the expenses of this scheme. I should have thought that that was going far beyond the limits which are usual or allowed even if we have a discussion of this formal Resolution. I think I should not be justified in doing so, and right hon. Gentlemen on that bench would find it very embarrassing to themselves later on, when they have to formulate Resolutions of this kind. We had several of these formal Resolutions yesterday, and discussed the limit within which the debate on them really should proceed. It was generally admitted that they were purely formal stages, rather in the nature of an authority to the Government to introduce Bills with financial provisions in them, and that is really the case here. I cannot produce my old-age pension scheme unless I get this Resolution. All the questions that have been put would be very relevant to the scheme itself on the Second Reading of the Bill, but not to a formal Resolution of this kind. I admit that I have tried it, but quite unsuccessfully, and I think I am following a good example, and am not justified in entering upon a discussion upon the character and essence of the scheme.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) thought the right hon. Gentleman was in error in saying it was necessary to get the Resolution before the Bill could be introduced. Last session not only was the Scottish Land Bill introduced before the Resolution was passed, but the Second Reading was taken and the Bill sent to a Committee.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: May I point out the difference? The financial provisions of that Bill were purely incidental. It was only one clause in the whole scheme. It was not in its nature a Bill founded on finance. The whole essence of this scheme is finance. This is a provision for the expenditure of millions of money, therefore the foundation of the scheme is finance, and you must have a Resolution.

Sir F. BANBURY said that that was the first time he had ever heard that the procedure of that House was regulated by the amount of money involved, and that for a Bill dealing with £1,000,000 they had a procedure different from that for a Bill dealing with £500,000. That was not the rule of the House, and it had never been in force. His idea was that the amount to be provided under the Scottish Holdings Bill was something like £100,000, but he differed from the right hon. Gentleman when he said the money had anything to do with it, because the whole essence of the Bill depended on what the new Department would be able to do in creating new holdings. The reason given by the right hon. Gentleman for taking this stage at the present moment was not founded on fact, and had never been advanced before. Then he had said this was a purely formal Resolution, and that it was understood that these Resolutions were to be taken without discussion. But, unless he was very much mistaken, on two occasions on the introduction of a Resolution regarding the Aliens Bill, a large amount of the time of the House was given to it. It did not concern a large sum of money, but on the principle of the right hon. Gentleman, that they were to take a different course of procedure when large sums of money were concerned, and that the whole essence of the Bill was the expenditure of large sums of money, then this was an important occasion, and there should be a much longer discussion upon this Resolution than upon any other. His right hon. friend the Member for Wimbledon had observed upon the fact that it was very inconvenient that there was nothing on the Paper to show Members what was going to be discussed. Those who sat behind the right hon. Gentleman had been very much concerned during this session with that fact, and had over and over again brought to the notice of the Government that when they were in opposition they were equally concerned, and they had some justification in supposing that when the power was in their hands they would put an end to the system. They were borne out by the Prime Minister, who on the previous day had regretted the manner in which these Resolutions were presented, because they were in the custody of the clerks and Members were unable to obtain any information on the subject. A very simple act would remedy that evil. All the Leader of the House had to do was to instruct the officials of the House to have a copy put in the Vote Office, so that every Member would be able to find out what was going to take place. It would be perfectly easy for the Government to give facilities which they demanded when in opposition. They had had an opportunity of seeing the inconsistency of right hon. Gentlemen on the previous day. He hoped they would not be obliged to point it out every day. The question before them was extremely important. He was glad to see the hon. Member for Preston in his place, and hoped they would have the pleasure of listening to one of those excellent and sensible speeches with which he so often enlightened the House. By this Resolution the House was binding itself to authorise the payment of any sum of money—there was no limit to it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that this concerned millions of money. Millions of money to him were a very important matter. A million without the "s" at the end was a very important matter, and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer talked in an airy way about the expenditure of millions it frightened an old-fashioned Tory who he believed was perhaps sometimes, according to the President of the Board of Trade, a little archaic, and made him feel as if he would prefer to have lived in the old days when one did not spend millions without having given some little consideration to where they were to come from. He did not know where they were going to get these millions. The right hon. Gentleman knew what he was going to spend and he ought to have told them that, and where it was coming from, in the Resolution. The object of Committee of Ways and Means was to prevent Cabinet Ministers grasping the money of the taxpayer, and he hoped they would be able to do something to save the money of the taxpayer from the grasp of the right hon. Gentleman. He proposed to move to insert at the end of the Resolution the words "such amount not to exceed £1,200,000." The right hon. Gentleman looked astonished at that, but surely after the remarks he had made he did not expect him to provide him with millions. £1,200,000 was more than a million, and, therefore, one might say it was millions. He had gone a very long way in the direction the right hon. Gentleman desired, and he was not at all sure that the hon. Member for Preston would approve of his course. But it was always open to the hon. Member to move an Amendment to the Amendment, and if he considered £1,200,000 too much, and could show him good reasons for reducing the amount, he would be very pleased to follow the hon. Member into the lobby. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman, if he refused to accede to his Amendment, would advance some really adequate reasons why it should not be accepted. He had endeavoured to deal extremely leniently with the Government, and had in no way endeavoured to prevent the passage of the Bill. He did not approve of it, but he had endeavoured to make the best of a bad job, and had put down the amount which the Prime Minister had specified as that which would be required during this year for the administration of the Act; therefore he was not open to reproach that for a Party or any other purpose he had put down an impossible sum. It was only just that the House of Commons should have some little control over the expenditure of the nation. He was willing to take the word of the Prime Minister as to the amount to be spent, but he wished to pin him to it, and he could not conceive that anyone, however anxious to advance the cause of old-age pensions, could object to the sum which the Prime Minister had himself specified.

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'not exceeding in amount £1,200,000.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

Mr. STANLEY WILSON (Yorkshire, E.R., Holderness) protested against the House being asked to pass a Resolution of the highest importance without any satisfactory explanation. He would like to ask what had become of those economists below the gangway pledged to retrenchment? They were never there when proposals of this character were brought before the House. The Government were playing ducks and drakes with the finances of the country. They were thinking only of the present and nothing of the future. When they were asked to say how they were going to provide for the old-age pension scheme, they candidly admitted that they did not know. They were a Government of gamblers. A member of the Government said the other day that the Territorial system was a huge gamble, and now they had the Government gambling with the national finances. He was talking to a supporter of the Government in that House about the scheme. He asked him what his candid opinion was as to the way in which the Government intended to find the necessary money. His reply was, "It has nothing to do with us, your Party will have to do that." Was that sound finance? The Government brought forward proposals and expected the Government who followed to carry them into effect. He trusted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer would inform the House how many millions he really wanted, and what the expenses of carrying out the scheme would be. Otherwise he would have pleasure in supporting the Amendment.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I can hardly believe that the hon. Baronet is serious in moving the Amendment.

SIR F. BANBURY: Certainly I am.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Its effect will be to limit the operation of the Old-Age Pension Bill to the period between 1st January and 31st March next. After that date not a single person over seventy could receive a penny. If that is what the hon. baronet means the sooner we take the decision of the House upon it the better.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): I think probably my hon. friend will not press the Amendment to a division. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already pointed out, this Resolution does not deal with the finances of the year—in which case the Amendment would be perfectly appropriate—but with all the expense which is at any time going to be incurred under the Government Bill. Therefore we cannot lay down in this Resolution that the Bill is to be so framed that at no future time is the money to exceed the sum of £1,200,000. But leaving that point and coming to the more general aspects of the question, I think my hon. friends are perfectly justified in the view that this is a Resolution of a very exceptional character, and that if ever there was a case in which it was useful to have an opportunity of considering the financial obligations which we were undertaking before proceeding to legislate, surely it was the present occasion. Ordinarily when we pass one of these Resolutions they are formal from the financial point of view. But we are to-day passing a Resolution which is to enable us to bring in a Bill which is going entirely to upset in one direction or another, in one form or another, the whole financial system of the country. We are to-day passing a Resolution, the first stage of a Bill, which, whatever merits it may possess—and I for my part am most anxious to see the broad objects aimed at by an old-age pensions scheme carried out—will alter the whole complexion and substance of every Budget which every Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to bring in during the lifetime of the Members of the present Parliament. That is a very serious thing. Last year the Prime Minister, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, advised us to look ahead in our finance, not merely to consider the year's finance in isolation, but to consider it in relation to the claims which were coming upon the Exchequer in the next and subsequent years. I do not know whether the maxim which the late Chancellor of the Exchequer pressed upon our attention a few months ago has lost all virtue in his eyes, but to those who do desire to look forward at the present time I cannot imagine an occasion more suited for that general survey of our future financial obligations than is given by the present Resolution. If it were only £1,200,000 that was in question I should be disposed to agree with the present Chancellor of the Exchequer that it was unreasonable to ask him on account of that sum to give a sketch of his Budget for next year or the year after, or to go in detail into the merits or demerits of the Pension Bill for which he and his Government are responsible: but the right hon. Gentleman knows well enough that, while all of us must be anxious that the Pension Bill which the Government are bringing in shall not merely relieve the unmerited burdens of old age, but also be one which does nothing to impair the spirit of thrift, yet there is not a man who does not know that behind these objects the financial questions which this Bill is going to raise, and of which this debate is only the forerunner, are of the most serious kind. Everyone knows that the six millions which this scheme is to cost is but the beginning of an annual charge. In spite of the appeal made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer the night before last to my right hon. friend the Member for East Worcestershire not to make any suggestions which would increase the immediate charges upon the Exchequer in connection with the Pension Bill, everybody knows that it is perfectly impossible, that it is contemplated neither by the authors of the Bill nor by its critics, that the ultimate charge upon the taxpayers of this country is going to be limited to the six millions of which the Prime Minister spoke in his Budget speech. It is the beginning of a far larger expenditure. We have no suggestion made by the Government, who are responsible for the Bill, that they have in their mind even the slightest idea of how these obligations are going to be met. I have endeavoured to think out how the matter is to be dealt with, and I can see no alternatives except, on the one hand, an enormous additional charge on the direct taxation of this country—the merits or demerits of which I will not discuss now, but which will have an effect upon the industry and upon the prosperity of this country which I do not think anybody is likely to question—and, on the other hand, a great widening of the basis of taxation, a policy against which hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite have, in a very rash spirit, in my opinion, committed themselves strongly and even violently. If this Resolution authorises a Bill which is going inevitably to have the consequences which I have foreshadowed, surely the Government cannot complain if we take the opportunity of expressing our own anxieties on the subject, and, at the same time, of asking them, without giving the details of Budgets not yet in being, to indicate to the Committee and to the country from what sources of revenue they propose to draw these sums which are going to alter the whole character of future Budgets, even of the next Budget, and still more of the Budget which will follow the next, so that the country and the House may approach the question of how they are going to deal with old-age pensions with the knowledge which is absolutely necessary, the financial knowledge, as well as what I may call the social knowledge, incident to the consideration of the subject. Surely we may ask that they will help us at this the first stage of a measure whose financial results are going to be quite as important to the community as its social results, by telling us how they mean to deal with the great monetary and fiscal problem which, by their policy, they have pledged the country to solve. This is a fitting opportunity for asking the question. We have no means of compelling the Government to answer it, but I think that whatever may be said of these preliminary Resolutions in regard to ordinary measures, this Resolution does, at any rate, supply a fitting and proper occasion on which we may respectfully put our request before the Government and ask them to deal with the problem, and to ease anxieties the existence of which they can neither deny nor ignore.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I confess that I have some difficulty in understanding the attitude of the right hon. Gentleman. He does not pretend to support the Amendment of the hon. Baronet, which positively asks us to confine these legislative operations in regard to old-age pensions to one quarter of next year. The result would be that if the hon. Baronet's Resolution were carried we should have to bring in a Bill to go all over the same stages before Easter next year so as to allow the second instalment of the pension to be paid. That is the plain fact, and the effect of carrying this Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman does not deny it, and he does not support his colleague in the proposition he has made. But really I do not think that the Amendment is seriously intended. I may point out that we are now dealing with what has been regarded as a formal stage of a Resolution necessary as a preliminary to the introduction of any Bill which makes a charge on the finances of the country. Does the right hon. Gentleman ask the House to reject the Resolution which has been put from the Chair? If he does, then we cannot proceed a single step to give pensions this year; and I doubt whether a responsible Opposition will commit itself to that proposition. We could not introduce the Bill, it could not be printed or circulated, until this Resolution is passed by the Committee and reported to the House. This Bill is of such a character that not a clause of it would be in order and could not be properly discussed until the preliminary Resolution has been adopted. If hon. and right hon. Gentlemen are opposing this Resolution, then they are asking the House to debar us from submitting any proposal this year in regard to old-age pensions. What else remains? An inquiry is made the like of which I have never heard suggested in my experience by any Opposition. It is that we should produce for discussion now the Budget of next year, in order to see whether it conforms to the fiscal ideas of the right hon. Gentleman and his friends. Has such a proposition ever been put before the House? I am not going to respond to any invitation of that kind. I indicated clearly in my Budget statement that we had surveyed the ground in regard to this matter, that we were not proceeding with a light heart and without due consideration for the future; and I expressed my own strong and determined conviction, after examination and reflection, that the means to provide the necessary funds for the scheme of old-age pensions we were about to produce could be and would be found without any violation of the fundamental principles of our financial system, and without thrusting any undue burden on the shoulders of the taxpayers. Beyond that I do not think I ought to be asked to go, and I decline to allow this occasion to be made the opportunity of anticipating the financial propositions of another year.

SIR F. BANBURY pointed out that after 31st March, the £1,200,000 would still be available, though the amount of money provided would not be of a sufficient amount to cover the objects that the Government intended to carry out. His contention was that the House ought not to grant more than the £1,200,000, and if the sum was not sufficient for the purposes of the Government then they should provide for the further expenditure in the next Budget and bring in an amended Bill to increase the sum.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) said that the Prime Minister obviously had in his mind such money Resolutions as were necessary for a Bill with money clauses in it—Bills like the Aliens Bill, the Scottish Landholders Bill, and the Factories (Amendment) Bill. In these Bills, however, the money provisions were wholly subordinate to, and almost a negligible feature of, the legislative proposals. That was not the case here. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, and the Prime Minister repeated, that every clause of the measure really made it a money Bill; and if any discussion on a money Resolution relating to it could be justified here was the occasion when it was legitimate. Though technically this Resolution was brought in so as to found the Old-Age Pensions Bill upon it, it was in point of fact one of the Budget resolutions. The Government had probably considered whether the old-age pension scheme could be included in the Finance Bill. If they had been able so to include it, there would have been one Bill instead of two.

MR. ASQUITH: That is the very reason why this is not a Budget Resolution. This is a Resolution to authorise the spending of money on old-age pensions, and we have to legislate for that in another Bill.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said he was accustomed to the equanimity with which the Government provided for the spending of money without considering how the money was to be raised. He thought it was not a bad thing that he, as an ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer, should remind the Committee that when they resolved to spend money they had to raise that money. The outstanding feature of the Budget was the establishment of old-age pensions, and the Resolution before the Committee said, "It is expedient to provide for old-age pensions." That was exactly what the Government ought to do; and what the Opposition complained of was that, the main difficulty being to find the money, the Government made no provision in their scheme for more than a fifth part of the expenditure. Was that a reasonable proposition? Last year the Prime Minister in calling attention to the question of old-age pensions told the House that they must look ahead, that they must not regard the finance of the year as separable from the rest of their financial policy, and that if they meant to lay the foundation of a great and costly scheme of old-age pensions they must be content to cast their eyes ahead and survey the future over a series of years. Last year accordingly, when the right hon. Gentleman seemed likely to remain Chancellor of the Exchequer, and would have to pay for his own Bill, he set aside the sum of £2,500,000 as a nest egg for this purpose of old-age pensions before he had incurred any liability. It was quite true that the nest egg was not enough. In the first year the pensions were to cost less than half that sum, but for next year he had accepted a burden of anything from £7,000,000 upwards, and the right hon. Gentleman had not put by a penny to meet it. He thought the Committee were entitled on this Resolution to press the right hon. Gentleman to say what his intentions were. After all, what had he done? He had suggested that he might raid the Sinking Fund, a proposal which was received with condemnation and regret by every speaker on his own side of the House who had alluded to the matter. Beyond that the right hon. Gentleman had informed a meeting outside that he had convictions that the money would be forthcoming. They wanted to know on what the right hon. Gentleman's convictions were based. They pressed not for the Budget of next year, but for some indication of the lines on which he was intending to proceed, particularly in view of the solemn statement of the Prime Minister last year that if old-age pensions were to be granted out of taxation it was only equitable that a contribution towards them should be paid by the working classes. What conceivable meaning had that phrase in the mouth of a Minister when at the moment that he established old-age pensions he removed one of the very few taxes which the working man who was not a consumer of alcohol or of tobacco, which was not infrequently the case——

*THE CHAIRMAN said that the right hon. Gentleman was now getting a little wide of the Resolution before the Committee. This was a money Committee; they were not in Committee of Ways and Means, and the right hon. Gentleman could not go over the whole ground of the Budget.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that it was not his intention to transgress order. He only wanted to recite the main fact of the Budget—the establishment of an old-age pension scheme—and to point out that at the same moment the right hon. Gentleman proposed to reduce by one-half one of the few taxes by which working men who were not consumers of alcohol could contribute to that scheme. He wanted to know what this Resolution really meant and what was the meaning of the language the right hon. Gentleman used at Lancaster so recently as this year.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE said that he really could not enter now into the matter raised by the right hon. Gentleman; he would be absolutely out of order. The right hon. Gentleman had asked whether there was any precedent for the present procedure. He thought that the precedent most in point was the Free Education Grant Bill in 1891. The basis of that Bill was purely financial. He accepted the position of the right hon. Gentleman as to there being two classes of Bills—one in which the finance proposals were purely accidental, and the other where the whole basis of the Bill was finance. When the financial Resolution was moved in 1891 the general attitude of the Opposition Leader to it was very much the general attitude of the present Leader of the Opposition to the old-age pension scheme of the Government. The Resolution in 1891 was not opposed by Sir William Harcourt except on the ground that it was taken late at night. Sir William Harcourt admitted that it was a purely formal stage, and he did not embark on a general discussion of the finances of the year. He might also point out to the hon. Baronet that the only provision made that year was for barely a quarter of the grant that was due under the Bill. The provision for the whole year was not made till the following year. On that occasion the Leader of the House got up and explained why the Resolution was taken late at night, and that was the whole discussion. As to the precedents, he would point out that when an Opposition was opposed root and branch to the main purpose of the Bill they would be justified in taking advantage of every stage to criticise and—he would not use the word obstruct, but retard the progress of the Bill. He, however, understood that the action of the Opposition was in the main friendly towards the general proposal in the Old-Age Pension Bill, and under these conditions he did not see how the right hon. Gentleman could enter largely into the questions raised by him.

SIR F. BANBURY said that the position in which the Government found themselves arose, in his opinion, from the entire mismanagement of their business. If they had given any idea in the Budget discussions as to what the old-age pension scheme would develop into and how much it would cost, it would not have been necessary to introduce the Amendment he had proposed in the form it took. But there was no indication of that. The Prime Minister had said the scheme would cost six millions, the Chancellor of the Exchequer first said seven millions and then between six and seven millions. Therefore, in his opinion, it was necessary to do something to limit the extravagance of hon. Gentlemen opposite. As to precedents, he would point out that an authority in the House had stated that they could always find in the House of Commons a foolish precedent for anything. The right hon. Gentleman had found a foolish precedent, which, however, was no justification for the present procedure. The proper course would be to put in some Amendment to limit the expenditure, but he saw the difficulty the Government were in by not taking the House fully into their confidence and by not making full provision for inevitable expenditure. The expenditure ought to have commenced at once; but for some obscure reason the Prime Minister had put off the obligation of making provision for the expenses of the scheme on to his successor. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman would be in power next year; but, at any rate, he had pushed the expenditure off till next year, and had landed the House of Commons in an extremely awkward position. He recognised that they had got to put up with having a bad Government with a majority which was too big; and if they chose to conduct themselves in this way, all that the Opposition could do was to make their protest. He had shown good reasons for proposing his Amendment, but on reconsideration he begged leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question again proposed.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth) said that hon. Members might be strongly in favour of a Pensions Bill, but just as strongly opposed to the financial proposals of the Government. He was in that position. The Resolution only provided for the payment of pensions during January, February, and March next year, but the Budget was not generally introduced till the middle of April. This year it did not come on till 7th May, and if next year's Budget did not come on till the corresponding date how was the money to be provided for the pensions in the intervening period of a month and seven days? There was not the slightest suggestion of obstruction in raising questions like that dealt with in the Amendment. It was quite compatible with the highest desire to further the interests of a Pensions Bill to point out the difficulties that might arise in carrying out that scheme. There was a possible chance of criticism inducing a modification of the proposed arrangements. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that he wished to prepare people who were too nervous as to what would happen next year. Did that right hon. Gentleman imagine that the anxiety would be any the less when he told them that the source from which the money of the old-age pensions was to come was entirely an open question, and that next year he would have to provide eight or ten millions for that purpose? He did not think that that argument would appeal to many people in the country who suspected that they were aimed at by the proposals hinted at by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If a private individual, company, or corporation which had contracted to pay an annuity, and could only see their way to pay the annuity for one year, were to say that in the course of next year they would have other sources from which to pay the annuity, would that be regarded as sound finance? Would it be regarded in any quarter as prudent business? The present Government were incurring this liability for old-age pensions, but were not giving the slightest hint as to where they were going to get the money to meet it. He thought good had been done by having an opportunity of discussing the matter. This was only one of the six opportunities the House had of discussing a Money Bill. They had not got very far in the matter yet, and therefore he did not think the two opportunities that they had had could be taken as great opportunities for discussing the question. The Resolution was a formal one and there was nothing before the Committee which they could weigh, nor any proposal upon which they could express an opinion.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said he had no desire to detain the Committee, but he thought some protest ought to be made from the back benches against the introduction of the remarkable and novel doctrine which had been proposed to-day and yesterday. On both occasions what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said amounted simply to the fact that this was a Resolution put forward by the Government, and that any discussion was fatuous and improper; that these Resolutions were purely formal, they were not put upon the Table or the Paper to be discussed, but to be passed, and if the Committee desired information about them they were asking the Government for that which the Government thought they ought not to ask, which they had no business to have, and which the Government refused to give. That seemed to be not only a very strong doctrine, but a thoroughly erroneous and dangerous one. This Resolution was the foundation of the Old-age Pensions Bill and the scheme to be brought in by it, and the question was whether the House ought to discuss a Resolution of that kind. He repudiated the right hon. Gentleman's doctrine that they were not. The right hon. Gentleman said that the hon. Member who initiated this discussion had provided him with a wide field of debate. On the contrary it was not the hon. Member but the Government, by moving this Resolution, that had provided a wide field of debate, namely, whether or not the House of Commons situated as they were, owing to pledges given by hon. Members with regard to economy, were to be allowed to discuss this Resolution. He had risen to enter his protest against the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman that they were not.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford) thought it was impossible to take the line that this was a formal Resolution that could not be discussed. In the case of the Education Bill, which was to involve an expenditure of £1,500,000, they had already taken the Second Reading and there had been no Resolution brought before this House with regard to the expenditure to be made under that Bill. The Government, he knew, thought very little of these Resolutions, but the Resolution before the Committee was quite different from that which would be brought forward for the Education Bill. It involved a great principle in regard to finance which was not connected with the Bill itself. Many hon. Members, of whom he was one, had always been very strong adherents to the principle of old-age pensions of a certain character, and this was an opportunity when that principle could be discussed quite apart from the principle of the Bill. It, therefore, was a very proper opportunity to protest against the light-hearted manner in which the Government proposed these Resolutions. The Resolution before the Committee pledged them to the finance of the Government Bill, which was very different from what many hon. Members desired. Many thought it would be far better if old-age pensions had been founded on a contributory scheme, and this Resolution bound the Committee to a non-contributory scheme which might carry them a good deal further than the finance now asked for. They were pledging themselves to a universal old-age pension scheme, and therefore it was perfectly legitimate that they should ask for some better explanation of how the Government intended to meet the enormous liability they were undertaking.

Mr. STARKEY (Nottinghamshire, Newark) also desired to add his protest to those that had been already made against the principle of asking for a small sum now and leaving it probably to another Government to provide for the large amounts that would be required.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That it is expedient to provide for old-age pensions, and to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any expenses incurred for that purpose and connected therewith."

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES [EXPENSES].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That for the purposes of any Act of the present session to make further provision with respect to University Education in Ireland, it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament—(a) of the remuneration of the secretary to the Commissioners, and of any persons appointed or employed by them, and of any expenses incurred by the Commissioners in the execution of such Act; and (b) of grants for the purposes of either of the new Universities, or of the constitutent colleges of the new University at Dublin, or of the governing bodies thereof."—(*Mr. Birrell.*)

SIR F. BANBURY said on the Resolution just passed the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that as it dealt with a large sum it really did not require explanation. This Resolution dealt with a very small sum, but they had received no explanation of any sort of kind.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): It is in the Bill.

SIR F. BANBURY said that he was not on the Standing Committee which would have to consider the Bill, and he would not know what was done there. He would be one of the 600 Members who would have little or no opportunity of discussing the Bill, even if they desired to do so, but he was one of those who would have to provide the requisite funds, and he felt it was necessary to ask the right hon. Gentleman a few searching questions before allowing the Resolution to pass. The Resolution was of a very vague character, and covered a very large field. It said—

"For the purpose of any Act in the present session."

He did not know how many Acts the right hon. Gentleman meant to bring in dealing with Irish Universities. Probably the explanation was that it was formal phraseology which had always been adopted; but one was a little suspicious of anything connected with the Irish Department at the present moment. Therefore, when they saw those words, and remembered that they were only in May, he would like to know whether or not it was the intention of the right hon. Gentleman to bring in another measure dealing with Irish Universities.

MR. BIRRELL: No.

SIR F. BANBURY said he had been obliged, owing to the exigencies of circumstances, to make himself acquainted with the phraseology of these different Resolutions and as far as he could remember he did not recall that a Resolution of this kind had ever been divided into two parts; the general Resolution usually covered everything. In this case there was apparently a very large sum of money to be spent in Ireland. Under paragraph (a) of the Resolution they had to provide remuneration for the secretary to the Commissioners and for persons employed by them, and they had also to provide for the expenses of the Commissioners. He thought they should at least know from the right hon. Gentleman what was proposed to be paid to the secretary, how many persons were to be employed, and what they were to be paid, because the words of the Resolution opened up a very wide field. If much money were got from England, they might be scattering it about in all directions. They might employ persons for a day or two, and hard-earned money might be poured into an insatiable maw. He would like to know what expenditure was contemplated by the

Commissioners, but at this stage he proposed to move an Amendment limiting the amount to £2,000 per annum. He did not suppose that the secretary to the Commission would require more than £500, and that would leave £1,500 for the persons appointed by the Commission. He was quite willing, if the right hon. Gentleman showed him any good grounds, to alter the amount, and make it larger or smaller as the case might be. But he did not think that they ought to vote blank cheques for the right hon. Gentleman in this manner. He had always protested against voting blank cheques, and, greatly as he respected the right hon. Gentleman, that respect did not go so far as to give him the facilities which he had endeavoured to prevent other right hon. Gentlemen from obtaining.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 7, after the word 'Act,' to insert the words 'such sum not to exceed £2,000 per annum.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

Mr. BIRRELL: The hon. Baronet is in such a reasonable mood that I really think that if the matter were left to him and me to settle between us we should possibly strike a bargain which would give great pleasure to the secretary to the Commission, whoever he may be, because as it is he and everybody else in the matter will be left to the tender mercies of the Treasury, and the tender mercies of the Treasury are very severe. This Commission is a statutory Commission, appointed to frame statutory regulations for the two Universities. It is a Commission of a kind absolutely essential for the purposes of the Bill. There are a great many examples for it. There are precedents for the salaries, which I doubt not will be most scrupulously observed, and the expenses incurred will certainly be of most moderate dimensions. The salary for the secretary named by the hon. Baronet, if that sum should not be in excess, will be about the amount he stated; and with regard to the persons employed, the language of the Resolution has to be used because one cannot put a limit to the operations of a statutory Commission of this kind. But really the cost is quite of the smallest dimensions, and I should be very much surprised if the sum the hon. Baronet named did not altogether meet the exigencies of the case. He may rest assured that it is not an occasion for casting money broadcast over Ireland, or for finding jobs for people, or anything of that sort. The Commissioners will be austere educational persons having no other object in view than to frame proper statutes and regulations for these Universities, to arrange for professors, and a few posts of that kind, and for compensation and the like, which, of course, will come out of the University funds. They will be judiciously minded people and not extravagant people. The whole of their staff will consist of the secretary, and there may be one or two other persons by way of assisting him. It may be necessary to employ persons to find out the facts of certain localities to be visited by the Commissioners, but I can assure the hon. Baronet that this is an exceedingly small matter which is governed by precedents. We have the precedents before us as to remuneration to be awarded through the secretary, and the whole thing will be done on that stern and austere footing which properly belongs to the Universities, which suffer none of the extravagance which I am sorry to say seems characteristic of some departments of expenditure.

Mr. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): I do not wonder that my hon. friend has again raised a protest, because we on this side were severely criticised when we made a proposal of this nature. I fully admit that we have been responsible probably in a larger degree than the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues, but it must be obvious that the situation is somewhat different. We have never claimed to be the party who were animated solely by a desire for public economy, and the criticism always advanced by Gentlemen opposite is that we do everything in the slackest and most extravagant fashion. But I must say that those who profess these virtues, now they have come into power, not only follow our own bad example, but use what was done in our time as precedents to justify what they now do, and they forget all they said when they were in a less responsible position. So far as the general ground is concerned, I do not wonder that my hon. friend moved the Amendment. I think it is to be regretted that on occasions like this—I do not care from which side the Government is formed—the Government should seem to be always unable to tell the House anything definite either as to the size of these Commissions or the precise work they will have to do, or the cost that it will cause to the State. The Chief Secretary told us that we might be quite happy as taxpayers, because the control of the Treasury which will ultimately settle this matter would be far more effective than would be even the vigorous control of my hon. friend behind me, the Member for the City. I am not quite sure that this is a prudent or satisfactory way in which to leave the matter. The Chief Secretary says that he has had experience of the Treasury and that he knows what a stern watchdog it is over public expenditure. I agree with him. I have had a longer experience than he of the Treasury, and I entirely agree from my own experience, for what it is worth, that it would be far better if the Minister responsible for the particular work that is done were in a position to put his case fully before Parliament and get the sanction of Parliament for this expenditure, than leave it ultimately to be fought out between himself and the Treasury; because it not infrequently happens that the Treasury secures economy on one point or another, which is not satisfactory, which is parsimonious economy, and which does not lead to good administration, so that the Minister in charge is compelled, by sheer boredom, and not because he is convinced, to consent to the demands of the Department, and in that way you do not get such a satisfactory result as you would obtain if the bargain was made in the face of Parliament. However, this applies to both sides, and I cannot rest myself on the fact that we have been more virtuous than the right hon. Gentleman is now; but when they have the opportunity they fall into the same vicious way. In regard to the provision of money for this scheme, I cannot support the Amendment. I am not a supporter of the Bill, and I voted against it. I have not so far been regular in my attendance in the Standing Committee, but any vote I am likely to give there would be in the direction of strengthening, if it were possible, the undenominational character of the Universities. I believe, whatever may be the safeguards imposed by Parliament, these new Universities must ultimately become denominational, and therefore the kind of University to which I am opposed, as not leading to good education; but I acknowledge the fact that this Parliament has definitely decided, so far as the Second Reading goes, that these Universities are to be established, and the risk, if it be one, is to be run. In these circumstances, there are two things which seem to be clear. One is that the future of the Universities, whether denominational or undenominational, must depend on the way in which the foundations are laid by the Statutory Commission. In these circumstances I urge on my hon. friend, having reference to the vastness of the subject, and the great possibility, if the hopes of the right hon. Gentleman are realised, that is before this new step in the educational work of Ireland, and to the fact that in this, the greatest undenominational Parliament, as it has been claimed to be, so far as numbers and representatives are concerned, this offer has been made by the majority to establish and endow what many people on that side as well as this, believe will ultimately be denominational Universities, that it is desirable not to deal with the matter with a niggardly hand. Therefore, whether it be in regard to the Commission, or the money to be found for the Universities, I certainly could not be a party to an Amendment which would possibly interfere with the proper and satisfactory performance of their duties by the Commissioners, in whom will rest the commencement of the work. A reduction of the amount might have a very unsatisfactory effect on the work they would have to do. I quite agree with my hon. friend in his general observations, but I wish to make it clear that if he presses the Amendment to a division, which, I hope, he may possibly not do, I shall not be able to support him.

SIR F. BANBURY said he was sorry his right hon. friend would not be able to support him in the lobby. He did not want to put any pressure on him in that direction, but it was very important that there should be a certain limit imposed upon these money Resolutions. He also had voted against the Second Reading of the Bill and he did not wish to put a limit which could be open to the reproach of being niggardly. That was why he had asked the right hon. Gentleman what he thought the cost would be, and he would be prepared to alter his Amendment accordingly. The right hon. Gentleman did not think the amount he had put down would be expended, and therefore, there could be no question of being niggardly or preventing the operation of the first part of the Resolution. He thought it was necessary to put some limit to this expenditure, and not leave it entirely in the hands of the Treasury and a Minister of the Crown, whoever he might be, because there might be a new Chief Secretary——

MR. BIRRELL: The Commission will be over in eighteen months.

SIR F. BANBURY said the argument might be advanced that if the Commission went on for any great length of time new obligations might arise, but if it was only going on for eighteen months, and they were told that this sum was sufficient, that was a very excellent reason for supporting him in the lobby. It was on Mr. Forster's assurance that the education rate would not exceed 3d. in the £ that the Act of 1870 was passed. But the House of Commons of that day were fools enough not to put a binding limit. If they had done that we should all have been very much better off. He hoped they would not repeat that error, and would prevent the right hon. Gentleman or anybody else from indulging in too generous proposals after he had got his Bill through the House.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.) supported the Amendment as a protest against the methods used by the Chief Secretary, not only on this Resolution, but all through the conduct of the Bill. In the Standing Committee one of their chief objections to the Bill and the way in which it was being pushed through was that all the most important things connected with the setting up of the Universities were contained in charters, which they were not allowed to discuss, and that these important things ought to be included in the Bill. Here again the most important matter involved in this Resolution, the amount that the House of Commons was asked to vote, was not included in the Resolution at all. With reference to the second part, the Bill stated definitely the sum which the House of Commons was asked to grant for the purposes of the University. It was £80,000 a year, and a capital sum of £230,000 for building and other purposes. No reason had been given by the Chief Secretary why they should not pursue the same course in reference to the amount of money to be spent in connection with the Commission to be appointed. The right hon. Gentleman had given precisely the same class of answer that he had been giving for the last three or four days in the Committee. He said, "If you leave this to me or to certain officials of the Treasury all will be well." From his experience, extending now over nearly two years, of the right hon. Gentleman he regretted to have to say that he was not content to leave these matters solely in his hands, and if they had to vote any sums of money for this or any other purpose, he would rather fix definitely once for all in the House what the exact amount was to be than leave it to the tender mercies of the Chief Secretary—whose mercies he did not look upon as tender as a rule—or those of the Treasury officials. For these reasons he should support the Amendment.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 57; Noes, 276. (Division List No. 106.)

Question put.

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F.
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O.
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S)
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gordon, J.
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Helmsley, Viscount
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Remnant, James Farquharson
Renton, Leslie
Ropner, Colonel Sir Robert
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Sloan, Thomas Henry
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Colonel Sandys.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Ambrose, Robert
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beauchamp, E.
Benn, Sir J. Williams (Devonp'rt
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bertram, Julius
Bethell, Sir J H. (Essex, Romf'rd
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Burke, E. Haviland-
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt. Hn. Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cowan, W. H.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalmeny, Lord
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne, Major E. Martin (Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grayson, Albert Victor
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Woc'r r)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Drbyshire, N.E.)
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Heaton, John Henniker
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N.
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred

Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carn'rvonshire)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich)
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.)
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, Capt. Hn A. C. (Kincard
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tiprary N. Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O' Kelly, James (Roscom'on, N.
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas (W. Mnm'th)
Richards, T. F. (W'lverh'mpt'n)
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Starkey, John R.
Steadman, W. C.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton)
Thornton, Percy M.
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarth'n
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson Henry J. (York, W.R)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

SIR F. BANBURY said he had a further Amendment to move to limit the operation of paragraph (b). The same arguments applied to this section as to paragraph (a). He wished to know definitely how much money the right hon. Gentleman proposed to take. Why was the amount not put in the Resolution, and why did the right hon. Gentleman object to a limit being put in? He presumed the Chief Secretary had carefully considered the question of ways and means. He did not believe in giving blank cheques to any Minister, more especially in regard to what was after all a contentious Bill. He proposed to put the second part of this Resolution into a business-like form by adding at the end "Such grants not to exceed £80,000 per annum." The case differed from the previous section, because the labours of the Universities would go on for ever. They had, fortunately, an economical Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, and it was quite possible that he would think £80,000 a sufficient sum. When the Committee under a Resolution of this character practically gave a blank cheque the temptation to go on spending the money, knowing the House of Commons had no control over it was so great that some restriction ought to be imposed. They all knew the great pressure which hon. Members below the gangway were able to put upon the Government in matters of this kind. Probably the Chief Secretary would tell them that none of this money would be given without the consent of the Treasury, and that they would see it was not wasted. The Chancellor of the Exchequer talked about spending millions in an airy and light-hearted way, but he would remind him that the Opposition were committed to economy and desired to see that there should be no undue expenditure. In order to rescue the right hon. Gentleman from the temptation of spending too much money he moved this Amendment. He did not wish to do anything unreasonable, but he wanted the Bill confined to the object for which they were told it had been introduced. It was because he did not want this expenditure to be increased and because he thought that without the control of Parliament the expenditure might rise to an unforeseen extent that he moved his Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"At the end of the Question, to add the words 'such grants not to exceed £80,000 per annum.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury*).

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. CHARLES CRAIG said he could not support the Amendment. The Bill was as bad as it could be, but it had one redeeming feature from the point of view of an Irishman, and that was that it proposed to grant £230,000 as building grants, the bulk of which would come from England, and the sooner Ireland had this money and made use of it the better it would be. He hoped it would be of good use, though he had his doubts. The Amendment would keep the greater part of that money out of their hands for a considerable number of years, and as an Irishman he could not agree to that. Under the Bill they could get £230,000 in their hands in one year, and he said as an Irishman, "Let us have it." If it were in order he should object to this Resolution on the grounds that the amount to be raised on it was not large enough. The sums mentioned in the Bill would be totally inadequate to set up two Universities. The amount for Belfast University would only go a very small way to put that institution on a satisfactory basis. The amount proposed for the University in Dublin would be totally insufficient. It was a bad University in theory, but it must be palpable to those who knew anything about the cost of buildings that the amount allotted would be quite inadequate. If these proposed Universities were to be equipped in anything like a modern and proper way a sum of at least three times that mentioned in the Bill would be required. But he supposed that as the Chief Secretary had failed to induce the Treasury to grant a larger amount he would also fail to urge this point successfully.

SIR F. BANBURY said he did not quite understand the objection of his hon. friend. The Chief Secretary had given no explanation of the Resolution, and, unfortunately, he was not a Member of the Committee, so that it was difficult for him to be absolutely accurate in his knowledge of the contents of the Bill. The object of the Amendment was to confine the sum to be spent annually to £80,000. He gathered from his hon. friend that he was anxious that a lump sum of £230,000 should be given. If it was contemplated to give a lump sum he was perfectly willing to withdraw the Amendment he had moved, in order to move as another Amendment the insertion of the words: "Such sum not to exceed in all £230,000." He asked his hon. friend whether he would support that Amendment.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG said he understood the effect of that Amendment would be to permit an expenditure of only £80,000 per annum of the sum of £230,000. Would the hon. Member assure him that the £230,000 could, if necessary, be spent in one year?

MR. MARKHAM (Nottinghamshire, Mansfield) said he objected to the course which the discussion had followed. It was a pure case of deliberate obstruction. The same argument had been repeated from the Opposition Benches time after time. [AN HON. MEMBER: They were not arguments.] He agreed with his hon. friend that they were not arguments. The same words had been repeated time after time. The deliberate intention of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London was to waste the time of the House. He hoped the House would take notice that there was a deliberate course of obstruction being pursued which was making the House of Commons nothing more nor less than the laughing stock of the country. There was no business community in the world that would allow what had transpired in this House. It was a disgrace to the House of Commons.

Mr. BIRRELL said he was very glad to answer the question of the hon. Baronet. As he understood him, he found fault with this Resolution because it did not confine the possible expenditure on the Universities to the sums mentioned in the schedules, namely £80,000 annually and £230,000 as a capital sum. These were the sums decided upon after such consideration as they could give to the subject, which necessarily involved a good deal of consideration. The Government thought the estimate he mentioned in introducing the Bill was adequate, but he thought it was only barely adequate to start these Universities. Of course, the expenditure of £80,000 a year was not new expenditure. The present expenditure upon the Royal University and upon the three colleges amounted to £57,000, so that the only new additional expenditure was the difference between £57,000 and £80,000. The £57,000 was purely Irish money coming out of the Irish Church Fund, and English Members of Parliament did not require to take any credit for that portion of the expenditure. But it was quite impossible for the hon. Baronet or anybody else to pretend to say that they could lay down an economical and strict limit for the creation of two such Universities as these. He was very glad the Resolution did not tie up his hands absolutely. The matter would, of course, require the consideration of both Houses of Parliament, and it would be absurd and ridiculous for them for one moment to lay down the figures as absolute so that they could not increase them in case of necessity for so doing being shewn. Therefore, he altogether declined to accept any Amendment to the Resolution limiting their powers in the matter. The whole subject would receive the full consideration of the House. He could not pretend to say how much it would cost to acquire the site for the University in Dublin or to erect colleges in keeping with the extent of their designs. They had to form their estimate very economically, and it would very likely be adhered to, but, at any rate, the Resolution did not tie them down to a £5 note on one side or the other.

Mr. GORDON (Londonderry, S.) appealed to his hon friend to withdraw the Amendment. While he himself was opposed to the Bill, he contended as an Irishman that if the measure was to become law it would be a great misfortune if the hands of the right hon. Gentleman were to be tied in such a manner as would prevent him from making ample provision for the new Universities. In the Committee upstairs he would say a word in favour of giving larger sums than the right hon. Gentleman had indicated.

Dr. HAZEL (West Bromwich) said he had no objection to giving the Chief Secretary a blank cheque. But he would like to know what figures were to be put upon it. The right hon. Gentleman in introducing the Bill mentioned that there would be certain building grants. The sums mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman did not include provision for buildings such as would constitute a residential college. He understood that pressure was being put on the right hon. Gentleman in various quarters to increase the building grants so as to provide a sufficient sum for a residential college. It would relieve the minds of some Members of the House if they could get an assurance that the blank cheque would not be filled up with figures representing such an addition to the sums mentioned in the right hon. Gentleman's introductory speech as would provide for a residential college. Had or had not the right hon. Gentleman in his mind, as the result of getting this Resolution passed without a limit, the intention of so increasing the building grants as to provide for a residential college ?

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.) said that some hon. Members must have a voracious appetite for debate. They were asking the Chief Secretary what he would do on certain matters in connection with the Irish Universities Bill, though that Bill was being discussed day after day with wearisome iteration by the Standing Committee. Hon. Members would have ample opportunities in the Committee upstairs and on the Report Stage in the House, and he did not think that time should be taken up at present in the discussion of what was a mere formality. When the Resolution with respect to old-age pensions was under discussion earlier in the evening the Leader of the Opposition made a speech and left the House. and he observed, not without astonishment, that the right hon. Gentleman had not returned. An overwhelming majority of members were in favour of the Irish Universities Bill, but hour after hour was being wasted in debating the measure upstairs. There was apparently a desire on the part of some hon. Members to repeat that procedure on the floor of the House. He trusted that the good sense of this Assembly would prevail and that such Parliamentary antics would cease on the part of those who ought to have a better sense of their responsibilities.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston) protested against the language used by the hon. Member for the Mansfield Division. He regarded it as the first duty of the House to protect the taxpayers' pockets. He believed the hon. Member was one of those opposed to the sugar tax. Would he go to his constituents and say that the House was making it inevitable by talking against it ? These charges on the taxpayers would be inevitable unless they discussed them. This House was responsible for expenditure, and it was in this House alone that a protest ought to be made against its increase.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said that, as he understood, the second subsection of Clause 7 of the Bill together with the Schedules, imposed certain obligations on Parliament. The sums mentioned in the Schedule for the general purposes of the Universities were described as to be "annually paid out of moneys provided by Parliament." He took it that that was Parliamentary authority to pay those exact sums and no more. Therefore, it appeared to him to be absolutely unnecessary and out of order to propose now any limiting words. Then in subsection 3 of Clause 7 which provided the moneys for—

> "Purchasing lands and providing or improving the necessary buildings and equipment for the universities and colleges,"

he found the words—

> "Not exceeding the maximum sums specified in Part II. of the Third Schedule."

And when he referred to the Schedule he found £60,000 for Belfast University, £150,000 for Dublin University and College, £14,000 for Queen's College, Cork, and £6,000 for Queen's College, Galway. It was perfectly clear that it would be out of order to discuss the question of limiting either the annual or the capital sums. He took it that if it was desired by any Member to reduce any of those sums it would have to be done by a specific Resolution.

Sir F. BANBURY pointed out that the hon. Member's argument was the strongest that could be used in favour of his Amendment. If the amount in the Resolution were limited it would be limited by a Vote of the Whole House ; but if it were left unlimited in the Resolution, then it might be altered in Committee by the seventy Members who composed that Committee. He would not pay any attention to what had been said by the hon. Member for Mansfield. He thanked his hon. friend the Member for Preston for his intervention. He agreed with that hon. Gentleman that it was the first duty of hon. Members to safeguard the interests of the taxpayers ; and after the action of the hon. Member for Mansfield it was sheer hypocrisy for him to talk of going to his constituents and pledging himself to economy.

*The CHAIRMAN: The use of the word "hypocrisy" is out of order as applied to an hon. Member.

SIR F. BANBURY begged to withdraw the word "hypocrisy." He did not think he had ever before been guilty of a Parliamentary breach of order. But he believed the Committee would admit that he had sufficient provocation for it on the present occasion.

Question put.

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 48; Noes, 277. (Division List No. 107.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, RtHn.Sir Alex.F
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn.SirH.
Beach,Hn.Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Haddock, George B.
Hardy,Laurence(Kent,Ashford
Helmsley, Viscount
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir JohnH.
Kerry, Earl of
Lockwood, Rt.Hn.Lt.-Col.A.R.
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
M'Arthur, Charles
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore,JohnThrogmorton
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G.(Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease,Herbert Pike(Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson,John Frederick Peel
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W.)
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W.H.(Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Colonel Sandys.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashley, W. W.
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth);
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry,RedmondJ.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Bell, Richard
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil,LordR.(Marylebone, E.)
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalmeny, Lord
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dillon, John
Donelan, Captain A.
Duncan,C.(Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Duncan, Robert(Lanark,Govan
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gladstone,Rt.Hn HerbertJohn
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Grayson, Albert Victor
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie, J.Keir(MerthyrTydvil)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E)
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Heaton, John Henniker
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, W.Bateman(Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter

Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St.Pancras,E.)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon.David
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray,Capt.Hn A C.(Kincard)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary,Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow,W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Kelly, James(Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott,A.H.(Asht'n-und'r-Lyne)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Strauss, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel(Carmarthen, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G.R. (Wolverhampton)
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward,John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams,Llewelyn(Carmarth'n
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

Main Question again proposed.

MR. BIRRELL rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

The Committee divided:—Ayes, 270; Noes, 59. (Division List No. 108.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Agnew, George William
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Asquith,Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barlow, Sir John E. (Somerset)
Barnard, E. B.
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, RedmondJ.(Tyrone,N)
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,Sir J H.(Essex,Romfrd
Boland, John

Boulton, A. C. F.
Brace, William
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Crean, Eugene
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crooks, William
Crosfield, A. H.
Crossley, William J.
Cullinan, J.
Dalmeny, Lord
Davies, Ellis William (Eifion)
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Davies, W. Howell (Bristol, S.)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Donelan, Captain A.
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsal
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Edwards, Sir Francis (Radnor)
Elibank, Master of
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Fenwick Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Fuller, John Michael F.
Fullerton, Hugh
Gladstone, Rt.HnHerbert John
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Grayson, Albert Victor
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick

Halpin, J.
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Hardie, J.Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Hayden, John Patrick
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Healy, Timothy Michael
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon ,S.)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Hogan, Michael
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, W.Bateman(Somerset,N
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Hutton, Alfred Eddison
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kelley, George D.
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kilbride, Denis
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lambert, George
Lardner, James Carrige Rushe
Law, Hugh A. (Donegal, W.)
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras E)
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J.M.(Falkirk B'ghs
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down,S.)
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Mansfield, H. Rendall (Lincoln)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)

Menzies, Walter
Micklem, Nathaniel
Mond, A.
Mooney, J. J.
Murray,Capt.Hn A C.(Kincard)
Myer, Horatio
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary,Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Kelly, James(Roscommon,N
O'Malley, William
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Partington, Oswald
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Phillips, John (Longford, S.)
Pirie, Duncan V.
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, G. H. (Norwich)
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roche, John (Galway, East)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Russell, T. W.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C.E.(Manchester)
Scott, A.H.(Ashton-under-Lyne
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Sheehy, David
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Steadman, W. C.
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Taylor, Theodore C. (Radcliffe)
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton

Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke-upon-Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Llewelyn (Carmarth'n
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W.R.
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Yoxall, James Henry

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Whiteley and Mr. J. A. Pease.

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Rt. Hn Sir Alex. F
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craik, Sir Henry
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Duncan, Robert (Lanark, Govan
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gordon, J.
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashford
Helmsley, Viscount
Houston, Robert Paterson
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway, Rt. Hn. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nield, Herbert
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thornton, Percy M.
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-
Young, Samuel

Tellers for the Noes—Mr. Charles Craig and Mr. Ashley.

Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That, for the purposes of any Act of the present Session to make further provision with respect to University Education in Ireland, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament—(a) of the remuneration of the Secretary to the Commissioners, and of any persons appointed or employed by them, and of any expenses incurred by the Commissioners in the execution of such Act; and (b) of grants for the purposes of either of the new Universities, or of the constituent colleges of the new University at Dublin, or of the governing bodies thereof."

Resolution to be reported To-morrow.

SHETLAND MAIL SERVICE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Contract dated 6th day of December, 1907, between the Postmaster-General and the North of Scotland and Orkney and Shetland Steam Navigation Company for the conveyance of Mails between Aberdeen and the Shetland Islands (printed in Parliamentary Paper, No. 41, of Session 1908), be approved."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

MR. MOONEY (Newry) said that before the House decided to approve this contract he would like some information with regard to it. He noticed from the Treasury Minute that the provisions of the contract in general were in the ordinary form of Post Office contracts, but the contract itself provided for the use of the contractors of certain piers. He wished to know whether those piers were in private hands or were the property of the Government. If they were the property of the Government, were the contractors to pay rent to the Government for them? He asked this question, because he noticed the hon. Gentleman took powers to terminate this contract by a six months notice. He wished to know whether the Government could take away the piers the user of which had been in the contractors, and, if so, whether they were going to follow the precedent of Queenstown Harbour where no notice whatever was given. He also wished to know whether there was any difference between this contract and that entered into between the Government and the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said the contract was a perfectly simple matter, and had really no reference to the question of piers which the hon. Member wished to raise. Under the existing arrangement £3,600 a year it appeared was paid for certain postal services in these remote islands. It was very desirable that there should be an increased service in the herring season, and that had been now arranged for. It would be of very great use to all those engaged in what was practically their only paying industry, and for that increased service the extra amount per annum was very small. It seemed to him that the Postmaster-General and the Treasury had made a very excellent arrangement, and he suggested that this was one of the matters which might be allowed to pass without very much discussion. This was a very desirable thing to do, and it had been done at very cheap cost.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.) said that, as far as he had been able to ascertain, none of these piers were under the control of the Government, and the question of the hon. Member for Newry, therefore, did not arise in this case. With regard to what had been said by the hon. Member for the West Derby division, he thought the Government had made an excellent bargain, and perhaps even better than it appeared on paper, because they had a very small sum of money to pay for better communication between the mainland and the islands.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said the hon. Gentleman was no doubt right in saying that they had made an excellent bargain in the way of getting good value for their money, but he had not pointed out whether the extra expenditure was justified because there were more letters passing between these islands and the North of Scotland than there were some years ago. If it could not be shown that the number of inhabitants of these islands had increased and that trade had increased so that it was necessary to have increased facilities, and if it was simply that the inhabitants might have easier means of communication with the mainland, then he did not see why they should pay this amount.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said the whole matter had been very carefully gone into. A great increase of correspondence had taken place in the last few years, and therefore these islands were entitled to improved communication. He was sure they had made a very good bargain.

Question put, and agreed to.

ALDERNEY MAIL SERVICE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Contract, dated the 28th day of September, 1907, between the Postmaster-General and the Alderney Steam Packet Company, Limited, for the conveyance of Mails between Alderney and Guernsey, Alderney and Cherbourg, and other places at which the Company's Mail-ships call (printed in Parliamentary Paper, No. 23, of Session 1908), be approved."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Mr. MOONEY asked whether the piers at any of the places named in the Resolution were under the control of the Government, and if so, what charges they were making for the use of these piers. If a charge was being made, was it made by way of rent, was it so much per trip, or was it payment on the steamer's tonnage?

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD thought the contract disclosed a most remarkable state of affairs. It showed that the Treasury, which he presumed was a body with no conscience, had availed itself of a certain expansion of trade, and, taking advantage of a poor little steamboat company, had succeeded—he would not use the word "bullying," if that was not Parliamentary—but had insisted upon its making a very much worse bargain than it had hitherto had. The position of the matter seemed to have been this. A bargain was made for carrying mails between the Channel Islands. It was an inter-island service, and the bargain was on the footing that each packet of mails was paid for. At the time the bargain was made a very small sum per annum accrued to the steamboat company in respect to the carrying of the mails, but the business increased, people taking to writing letters to an extent which had not been dreamed of, with the result that a very large amount indeed—an increase from £400 to no less than £1,086 a year—was paid to the company, on the existing basis. What did the Treasury do? Immediately they found this out they said to this little steamboat company: "We are not going to send any more mails by you; you are getting too much. You cannot take the mails at this rate." The result was that this company, which was a very small affair, and to whom the loss of this mail service would be a very serious matter indeed, were practically forced to come to an agreement under which they had lost the profits they were getting, and were now only going to receive £600 a year for taking the mails whatever size they might be. Whilst they could congratulate the Treasury and the Postmaster-General on having made an exceedingly beneficial bargain from their point of view, and from the point of view of the taxpayer, the whole transaction, he ventured to think, did not appear quite satisfactory to those who would like to see a service like that of the Post Office carried out with reasonable regard to the interests of those who had to serve it on a certain basis and at a certain rate of pay.

MR. HOBHOUSE thought he could dispose in a sentence of the suggestion of sweating against the Treasury, which had been made by the hon. Member who had just spoken, in reference to this company. If the hon. Member would study the Treasury Minute he would see that the contract was entered into without there being any competing line, and consequently the company had a monopoly. Therefore they could charge the Treasury almost any sum to which the Treasury would yield. They had in these circumstances agreed to the payment of £600 a year, and that sum, although a reduction on what was paid up to 31st March, 1907, was a slight increase upon what was paid in previous years. When a company accepted payment in that way and without any trouble, he thought it might be concluded that they were quite satisfied. With regard to the point which had been raised by the hon. Member for Newry, he had not been able to go closely into the question, as he did not expect it to be put to him; but so far as he had been able to ascertain, there were no piers for which the Government were paid rent. Therefore he did not think the question that the hon. Member had in his mind arose.

MR. MOONEY said the question he asked was whether any of the piers to which mail packets went were under the control of the Government, and whether in the harbours they had the free use of the the piers.

MR. HOBHOUSE said that as far as he could ascertain these piers were private property, and not the property of the Government.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said he should not have risen but for the remarkable speech of the hon. Member for the West Derby division. He had been recently in one or two elections, and in his locker he had a leaflet which, after calling attention to the promises of the Liberal Government in regard to economy and reduction of expenditure, went on to state the reasons why the electors should not vote any longer for a Liberal Government. One reason was that expenditure had been increased during their term of office. That was a very desirable subject to discuss at elections, unquestionably; but let them imagine a leading member of the party who circulated a statement of this description calling attention to an increase of the expenditure of different Departments of the Government, standing up in his place and declaring, when the Government had succeeded in making a good bargain with a steam packet company, or any other company with which it did business, that they should be termed sweaters.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD: I did not use the word "sweaters."

Mr. JOHN WARD said that the hon. Gentleman had deplored that the Government insisted on the services of the country being conducted with greater economy than his own friends were able to exercise when in power. As the increase of expenditure under a Liberal Administration had formed such a feature at recent elections, he thought it well to call attention to the utterly contradictory position of the hon. Member for the West Derby division of Liverpool.

Sir F. BANBURY said the contract contained this clause—

> "In pursuance of the provisions contained in Statute 22, George III., cap. 45, no Member of the House of Commons shall be admitted to any share or part of this agreement or any benefit to arise therefrom contrary to the true intent and meaning of the said statute."

He could find no similar clause in the West Indian Colonial Mail Service contract, and on the face of it it seemed rather extraordinary that it should be necessary to put it in one and not in the other. He would like to know what the explanation was. If it was in one it should be in the other, unless there happened to be some Member of Parliament interested in it.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said he was responsible to the House for the presentation of this contract. When they came to the next contract he would be perfectly willing to explain why the clause was omitted.

Question put, and agreed to.

WEST INDIAN INTER-COLONIAL MAIL SERVICE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Contract, dated the 29th day of August, 1907, between the Crown Agents for the Colonies and the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company for the conveyance of Mails between certain Colonies in the West Indies for a period of ten years (printed in Parliamentary Paper, No. 24, of Session 1908), be approved."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Mr. John Ward.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said this contract was of a very much more important character than either of the two they had been discussing, not merely from the point of view of the amount of money involved, but also from the point of view of the particular traffic contemplated. There had hitherto been a contract, liable to be terminated at any time on three months notice, whereby the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company had to provide a fortnightly service between certain islands, and a four-weekly service between certain others. They undertook that service for the very moderate amount of £17,500 a year. He had during the last few months had the advantage of visiting some of these islands, and of experiencing some of the inconveniences met with by travellers, who had very great difficulty in getting from one island to the other. The whole trade of these islands depended on an efficient inter-island service. It was very noticeable, in Jamaica particularly, that the tendency was to get more nearly allied commercially, and he might almost say politically, with the United States, and there were considerable sections, in each of the islands, of people who honestly held that their interests would be better served by their being ceded to the United States. The black population were, curiously enough, absolutely loyal to the British Crown. It was the white traders who found their interests more in accord with those of the United States. Anything which could be done to give better inter-island facilities — transport and communication — both for goods and passengers, was worth far more to the permanent interests of these islands than the paltry two or three thousand pounds a year which was now proposed to be given. The £17,500 which used to be paid was only to be increased to £25,000 a year, which was a small subsidy, because steamboat services were exceedingly costly to carry on. He had no personal interest of any sort in the Packet Company, but he was exceedingly relieved to find that so desirable an inter-island service could be procured for such a reasonable amount, and when he found that in addition to giving this extremely desirable additional service, of which the islands were so badly in need, it was stipulated that two steamers should be built at an approximate cost of £100,000 and put upon the service, he thought the Treasury and the Postmaster had made very excellent arrangements. In Clause 4 of the contract he noticed that the contractors undertook not to increase materially the existing rates of freight and passage money without three months notice being given. He would like to know whether the Treasury had made any arrangements under which they could enforce that clause in respect for instance to through rates, because the passage money and rate of goods from one particular island to another was of very little importance. What really required to be protected was through rates, say from the United Kingdom to one or other of these islands, which would require at some point trans-shipment and the use of this particular service. Possibly there were one or two Members interested in this particular company, but he thought as he had had recent experience of the matter and had taken the trouble to read the contract, it might be useful for him, at all events, to express his own satisfaction at this very excellent arrangement.

*MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside) said it was very edifying to note that the right hon. Member, who was usually such a vigilant guardian of the public purse, adopted an entirely opposite rôle when something was going on in the nature of protection. As far as he could make out this subsidy was a purely protectionist measure, or at least had the effect of a protectionist measure, and the hon. Member's idea was that the object was to encourage trade between these Colonies—and, he supposed, incidentally between them and the Mother Country—as a process counteracting the tendency they might have to trade with the United States. He gathered that the trade of those Colonies with the United States tended to increase, and that consequently this country would do well to foster the trade between them and the Mother Country. This was an illustration of the tendency of such subsidies to go on increasing. The present subsidy had been greatly raised, and there was no security against being called upon to enter into contracts for still larger subsidies. The only security they had was a promise that the contractors would not raise their rates without three months notice, which was a very broad hint that they were likely to raise their rates. The whole arrangement was financially unsound and alien to the commercial and fiscal traditions of this country. This appeared to him to be an expenditure in the interests of the islands concerned and not in the interests of the trade of the Mother Country. If those islands had a profitable trade they should be capable of running it without a subsidy. The paying of a subsidy always meant they were getting comparatively little value for their money. He was at a loss to see why the revenues of the Mother Country should be expended in any such fashion. He would like to hear from the Minister in charge any excuse for this expenditure compatible with the general assertion of free trade principles. It seemed to him to be an expenditure of a purely protectionist kind. It was not on those lines that the maritime commerce of this country had been built up, and he saw in the proposal a departure from their principles which the Government should be called upon to justify.

MR. ASHLEY reminded the hon. Member in charge of this Resolution that he promised on the last contract to state fully and fairly the reason why the clause providing that no Member of the House of Commons should gain any advantage from these contracts had been excluded. This contract was a much more important one, and that was all the more reason why such a safeguard should be inserted.

SIR F. BANBURY said the subsidy under this contract was to be increased from £17,500 to £25,000 a year, and that was a very large increase. He did not agree with the argument of the hon. Member for Tyneside that a subsidy ought not to be granted because it was protectionist in its nature. That did not concern him, because if the contract was good and made on economical lines it did not matter whether it was protectionist or not. They had, however, to see that the contract was a proper one. No valid reason had been given for such a large increase. The only argument in support of this increase was that the company undertook to construct two new steamers for this service at a cost of £100,000. The companies were going to get the benefit of those steamers for this service, and he presumed they would not be constructed unless they were required for business purposes. He knew something about this company. They had a number of old-fashioned inefficient vessels and this seemed to be an opportunity for them to construct new and more efficient boats. Clause 4 of the contract provided that in the event of any material increase being made in the freights or the passage money three months notice must be given, and another clause laid down that the contract was to remain in force for ten years. Apparently, by giving three months notice they could do as they liked, because as the contract had ten years to run there was no control whatever over the company, and therefore Clause 4 was absolutely illusory. It seemed to him that this had simply been put in as a blind. Then came the question of the omission of the clause relating to Members of Parliament not taking any advantage under a contract made with the Government. It was only by chance that he found the existence of that clause. It seemed to him very extraordinary that they had three contracts brought forward on the same day dealing with three different steamship companies, and whilst in two of them this clause was inserted it had been omitted from the third. It might be argued that it was not necessary to put in a clause to that effect in this contract because the company to which the contract referred was the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, which was authorised under the Limited Liability Acts. He would like to know if the defence was going to be that where a Member of Parliament was a director or a shareholder in a limited liability company he was allowed to reap an advantage to which he was not entitled if he happened to be a partner in a private firm. It seemed to him that this raised an extremely important question, to which he hoped they would receive a satisfactory answer.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON hoped the arguments of the hon. Member for Tyneside would not have much weight with the Government. The Report which had been made on this question showed that an increase in the facilities of communication between these islands was very desirable. The words of the Report were to the effect that an increase in the facilities for communication between the islands was a matter of life or death to the West Indians. As to the new steamers he would like to know whether those boats had been actually laid down or not, and if they had not been taken in hand were they going to be built at once?

Mr. MARKHAM said he wished to know from the Solicitor-General the exact position of a Member of Parliament who was a director in the company concerned in this particular contract. Only last week he was in communication with a Government Department in regard to a tender for the supply of coal, and he was informed that as the particular colliery was his own property and not the property of a limited liability company he could not make a contract with the Government; but if it had happened to belong to a limited company in which he was a shareholder he would have been entitled to make a contract with the Government. He did not see the force of that argument. In innumerable cases Members of the House of Commons were owners in South Wales collieries which supplied coal to the Admiralty, and other hon. Members were connected with railways and other commercial enterprises. He would like the Solicitor-General to tell the House whether a Member of Parliament who happened to be the sole proprietor of a concern which was not a limited company was prevented from making a contract with the Government, and whether a Member of Parliament who was a director of a company acting under Charter and which was not a limited company was entitled to contract with His Majesty's Government.

Mr. HOBHOUSE said that up till the year 1905 the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company for something like sixty years had maintained a fortnightly service to the West Indies. In 1905 that contract terminated and a new one was signed in June of that year. The cost had previously been £84,500 a year, of which the Colonies contributed £24,600, and a further sum of about £10,000 was recovered from foreign countries, leaving a net charge on the Exchequer of £50,000 per annum. In 1906 the Royal Mail Company found they were running the service at a loss, and they threatened to withdraw altogether what was called the branch line service. The Government found themselves in the dilemma that they had either to agree to a subsidy or see the inter-Colonial communication disappear altogether. He confessed that if he had been in his present position at that time he would not have had a single moment's hesitation as to which course he would adopt. The Government, as a matter of fact, chose the alternative of giving the contractor a subsidy of £17,500, of which the United Kingdom gave £8,750 and the Colonies contributed a like sum. That was for a line not across the Atlantic, as provided for by the old contract, but for the branch service between Barbadoes and the other Colonies. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London had asked why they were paying £5,000 or £6,000 a year more than in 1906. The answer was very simple. The arrangement under which a subsidy of £17,500 was paid, of which the Colonies contributed one-half, only gave a fortnightly service to the southern islands, and a monthly service to the northern islands, and this was not at all a satisfactory state of affairs to the islands themselves. There were frequent delays in the service, and very great complaints on the part of the Colonies. The result of that arrangement was that Barbadoes withdrew altogether from the contract and stopped her contribution to the Colonial subsidy. Practically the contract terminated. In 1907, therefore, the same dilemma arose. They were bound to grant a subsidy to that line or leave the islands without any communication with the outer world. Again there could be no doubt or hesitation as to which of these two alternatives they had to accept, and a contract was arranged in terms which the House has now before it—a contract which he thought both commercially and from every other point of view redounded to the sagacity of the then Financial Secretary to the Treasury, and to the acumen of the Treasury generally. What were the terms of that contract? For a subsidy of £25,000, of which the United Kingdom contributed £12,500 and the Colonies a like sum, they got a fortnightly service for both the northern and the southern islands instead of a monthly service to the northern islands. But they got a great deal more than that. They also got two steamers instead of one, and a guaranteed connection four times out of five with the Transatlantic service Two new steamers were to be constructed. It might be that on a contract assured for ten years the company found it advantageous in every sense of the word to lay down two new steamers. The company were ready to lay down these steamers the moment the House approved of the contract. They therefore got assured communication between the islands themselves inter-Colonially, and between the islands and the outside world. He thought the Treasury might fairly be congratulated on having made a contract which gave the Colonies and ourselves an assured means of communication. That was the purely commercial side of the question, but it seemed to him that it was advantageously conducted from the point of view of the Colonies. This country had practically got all that it had up to 1905, and had saved £27,000 under the new arrangement, after allowing for the payments by the Post Office for Transatlantic mails. Commerce, if he might venture to say so, was not the last word in an arrangement of this sort. There were bonds and obligations, historical and traditional, which had to be considered in this relation. The West Indian Colonies were one of the oldest dependencies and possessions of this country. They were linked to us in their good times, and we reaped considerable advantage from that association with them, and, putting it on no other ground than that which he had stated, he thought we should be prepared to stand by them in the more evil times that had fallen upon them now. He went further than that and said that the orthodox free trader was in no way endangered by adhering to this contract. He had no intention of going into the question of free trade on a subject of this sort, but he did say quite clearly that the contract in no way infringed or impinged upon the orthodox free trade maxim that trade should be allowed to flow in its natural channels, and it in no way improperly fostered the trade of the West Indian Colonies. Mention had been made of the West Indian Commission of 1896. That Report laid it down that it was the imperative duty of this country to keep open the means of communication between this country and the West Indian Colonies, and the present Government had no need of being ashamed of having accepted that obligation and given a subsidy to keep open postal communications. The Government had laid down no regulations as to the carrying of cargo, but they said that if there was any alteration there should be three months notice.

AN HON. MEMBER asked the hon. Gentleman if he could explain what would happen after the three months notice had been given. Had the Government any option at all, or was the rate necessarily raised ?

MR. HOBHOUSE said he did not think there was any necessity to anticipate that the rate would be raised. At all events, if that case did occur there would be ample notice to shippers and others concerned. There was another consideration which he thought ought to weigh with the House. He had said that the West Indian Islands had fallen upon evil times. There were distinct signs that the industries in that part of the world were reviving, and he thought they were justified in giving these reviving industries opportunities for taking advantage of a line of steamers and securing that they should not be hindered in their renaissance by the want of shipping facilities. He reminded the House that in times past the Government of this country had had to come to the assistance of these Colonies with various grants-in-aid. These grants-in-aid had largely diminished, and they were a diminishing quantity, though they had not altogether disappeared. But supposing that they did not subsidise this line of steamers as they had done for postal purposes they would actually have had to increase these other subsidies to a far greater extent than they had done under this contract. Therefore, a good bargain had been concluded from the point of view of economy, and they had done a wise thing from the point of view of keeping up the communication which was essential in small and isolated communities of this sort with the outside world. Whether from the commercial or from the civilised and historical point of view, he ventured to say that there was no fault to be found with this contract.

SIR F. BANBURY : The hon. Gentleman has not answered my Question.

MR. HOBHOUSE : The Solicitor-General will reply.

*THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir S. EVANS, Glamorganshire, Mid.) said that the hon. Baronet had called attention to a clause in two of the mail contracts referred to—which had reference to a provision in an Act of 1782 forbidding Members of Parliament from entering into Government contracts, and imposing disabilities and penalties upon Members of Parliament entering into such contracts —and had asked why such a clause was omitted from the Royal Mail contract. His answer was that probably the clauses referred to were copied from old forms of contract entered into with private individuals ; but whether that was so or not, such a clause was quite unnecessary and useless in a contract with an incorporated company like the Royal Mail Company, which had existed as a corporate company for sixty or seventy years. The Act of 1782 contained an express provision in one of its sections (Section 3) that nothing in the Act contained should affect or apply to any incorporated trading company, like the Royal Mail Company. The House was well aware that whereas it was regarded as against public policy that a Member of Parliament should be directly interested in a Government contract, it had long been settled that there was no objection to a Member of the House being a shareholder in a company which entered into such contracts, and which had a separate legal existence, and was a separate legal entity. This was a sound distinction ; it was generally approved of ; and if it were otherwise, the result would be that no Member of this House could invest or be a shareholder in concerns like large railway or shipping or industrial companies which might have contracts either large or small with any Government Department.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said that the customary clause with reference to a Member of Parliament taking a contract with the Government appeared in two of the contracts which had been discussed. That clause was, in his opinion, on the most favourable explanation, mischievous surplusage. In the case of the third contract it was omitted altogether. Everyone would see that, whether the clause was inserted or not, it made no difference to the operation of the Act. It was, however, unfortunate that in a case where an hon. Member was chairman of the company concerned the clause should not make its appearance, and that a most unfortunate error in drafting should be corrected for the first time in this particular case. There remained attaching to any hon. Member all the vague terrors and pitfalls which might arise out of his giving a vote in accordance with his personal interest, and therefore in conflict with the rules and orders which made it dangerous for him to give a vote. He could congratulate the Government upon neither their draftsmanship nor their choice of the occasion to review the original defects in the contracts.

Question put, and agreed to.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES] REPORT.

Resolution reported, "That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of any Expenses, so far as not otherwise provided for, incurred by the Commissioners of Works under any Act of the present Session, to provide for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office, and for certain other public purposes."

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

SIR F. BANBURY said he did not wish to put the House to the trouble of a division over this Resolution, but he would like to have some explanation as to whether more than £600,000 was going to be expended. He understood that £600,000 was going to be provided out of the old Sinking Fund, which he thought was a mistake; but he would like some assurance that if they consented to the limit of £600,000 the Government would give notice of their intention to spend more than that if it were found necessary.

MR. HOBHOUSE said there was no intention of going beyond the sum specified.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said he had never been able to get a satisfactory answer to the question how much land was required beyond the amount secured under the original Act. In 1903 the Act was passed authorising the expenditure of money for sites for Government buildings and for the erection of those buildings on those sites. A great number of sites had been acquired under that Act five years ago, but not those in Great George Street for the extension of the present buildings. He had asked on two different occasions how much land remained unacquired for the purpose of that extension, but had not been able to get an answer.

MR. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden) said that his right hon. friend the First Commissioner of Works had asked him if this Resolution came up to-night to express his regret that he could not be present in the House owing to engagement on other official duties elsewhere. The right hon. Gentleman was present on the previous day when this matter was discussed in Committee and he had answered all the questions then raised. [OPPOSITION cries of "No."] He hoped the House would now allow the Report Stage of the Resolution to be taken.

MR. ASHLEY said that the explanation made matters worse. If the First Commissioner of Works had other official duties to perform, of course he must perform them. But he complained that the Government should take their Resolution at a time when they themselves admitted that the First Commissioner of Works could not be present. Several important questions had been put to the Government with reference to the sites for the public offices and the sums of money which had been spent on them; but no answer had been given to those questions. It was hardly fair to the House to leave them without a clear and relevant answer to these questions.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said he had been one of those who opposed the passing of the Public Sites Bill, to which the Report referred. As he understood, the Bill and this Resolution, had to do with the completion of the very important and uniform public buildings which were calculated vastly to improve the facilities for the public service, as well as to form a great improvement in an important portion of London. He had opposed the Bill because he thought that a considerable amount of money might have been saved by putting the public offices on another site. That, however, was not the point now. During the former discussion some confusion arose as to the provision and expenditure of the money. The First Commissioner of Works explained that a considerable portion of the money for the whole of the improvements had already been provided for, and therefore that did not need to be raised by this particular Resolution. In the course of the discussion, the right hon. Gentleman was asked what was the estimate of the total cost, but he was not able to give that with certainty. Then he was asked what was the amount of total cost already provided for in other financial Resolutions, and which would not be required to be raised by this financial Resolution. The House got no definite reply. Now a third point arose: what was the total area of land which would be required on which to build the public offices? A certain portion of the site still required to be bought, including that occupied by the Institute of Civil Engineers, which beautiful new building was to be pulled down. What he and his friends wanted was a general idea of the number of square yards which would be occupied by the new building, the number of square yards already bought and paid for, and the number still to be acquired. If a considerable portion of the land necessary had still to be bought and arbitrated upon, then the Estimates laid before the House might be very considerably increased in amount. He also wanted to know whether the complete plans had been actually drawn, and an estimate made of the total cost, and whether they were going to spend on the buildings on these sites at a rate of £30 or £35 per square yard. Those were points which they did not get elucidated on the last occasion. He very much regretted in the interest of public business that the First Commissioner of Works was not present, for he thought the House was entitled to the information asked for before they passed an important Resolution of this kind.

And, it being a quarter-past Eight of the Clock, Further Proceeding was postponed without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 4.

HOUSING OF WORKPEOPLE.

*Mr. MADDISON (Burnley), in moving "That this House considers that immediate steps should be taken to secure the provision of proper sanitary housing accommodation for workpeople employed upon works of construction and in other occupations of a temporary character," said that the Trade Union Group with which he was associated considered they were fortunate in the Minister to whom they had to make this appeal. The rank and file welcomed nothing so much as the inclusion of his right hon. friend in the Cabinet. It gave to the Cabinet a labour representation which had been of enormous advantage, not only to the right hon. Gentleman's own class, but to the nation at large, and the party with which he was associated thought there was considerable advantage in making this practical but immensely important appeal to the President of the Local Government Board. The grievance he brought to the attention of the House was a real one, but he wanted to make it perfectly clear that no wholesale charges were being brought against contractors and employers. Many employers and contractors had endeavoured to do their duty and fulfil their obligations in this respect. He did not suggest that navvies should live in marble halls, but he did claim that this rough but extremely valuable class of our fellow-countrymen should have something like the minimum of decency. There were between 100,000 and 200,000 of these people at the call of the nation for the execution of public work of the greatest importance, and therefore they were a class who had some claim to the attention of Parliament. His Motion was also framed to include people engaged in temporary occupations of another kind; such, for instance, as the hop-pickers, whose condition certainly ought to be remedied. Dr. Farrar, who was asked to investigate the conditions under which the hop-pickers worked, had furnished a most valuable Report, in which he gave some details which one would have liked to have been impossible. Of course, hop-picking differed from other works such as those of great public construction, and he did not expect that elaborate provision should be made for the short time they were engaged, but some provision ought to be made. Dr. Farrar reported that on one farm the pickers had to get water in a field from an open tank which was also used by cattle. On another farm the hop-pickers complained of the musty flavour of the water supplied to them, and upon investigation it was found that the water was conveyed in a barrel that had for many years been used for hog-wash. Dr. Farrar made other statements with regard to sanitary arrangements which he would not now go into, but they showed a most disgraceful state of things, that no discrimination was made between the sexes, and the doctor finally concluded by stating that nobody who could not provide decently for them should bring people to their fields. The Motion, however, mainly referred to navvies and others engaged on railways and other large works, largely carried on in the country districts where ordinary accommodation could not be obtained. He would not labor this point, as he was fortunate enough to have as a seconder of his Motion the hon. Member for Stoke, who zealously served the navvies of this country. They would also have a few words from the hon. Member for Bath, who had been engaged in mission work among the navvies and whose experience corresponded very largely with that of the hon. Member for Stoke. In the Report of Dr. Farrar upon the work of the Brooklands motor track there were some appalling statements. It was not a long job, but it was long enough to make it obligatory on the contractor to provide reasonable housing accommodation for the men employed. Dr. Farrar found no provision whatever made by the contractors for the housing accommodation of the men they employed. The contractor knew the number of men he was going to employ and how long the work would take, and he provided machinery and everything else required, and although there was no housing accommodation in the neighbourhood it never struck him that he should provide for the human factors, without which the work could not be carried out. Dr. Farrar in his Report said that men working on the night-shift resorted after work to the public-house where they had been to wash down their breakfasts, after which they laid down in the open to rest. If the weather happened to be cold they half-stupefied themselves with beer before taking their rest. These men had not even a hole dug in which they might lay their heads; and they had to stupefy themselves with drink, a remedy, he was bound to say, many would resort to without much encouragement before they went to rest. The Committee visited several public-houses, which they found so full as barely to afford standing room, and the navvies in those houses complained bitterly of the failure of the contractors to find accommodation for them. Dr. Farrar went into the statement that the navvies did not want accommodation and all the rest of it, and came to the conclusion that the genuine navvy, in large numbers, was a victim to these conditions. After the public-houses were closed, he found 6 men sleeping in a straw yard, 17 in a disused cowshed on the bare floor, a number sleeping round a coffee stall, and 300 asleep in a dale. He and those with whom he was associated were not extremists when they said this sort of thing must be stopped. That was the object of the Motion to-night. This was not a new question, because in 1846, when railways were being introduced into this country, a Select Committee sat to inquire into this very matter, and though they confined themselves to the question of railways, their recommendations applied to all works of a similar kind. One recommendation was as follows—

> "Your Committee is of opinion that previous to the collection of a body of these workpeople at any spot sufficient lodging should be ascertained to exist. When the neighbourhood cannot adequately supply it then the company should be required to provide it."

Again they said—

> "Your Committee adverts with pleasure to the evidence they have received from gentlemen largely engaged in executing public works to show that comfortable arrangements for lodging the men are directly and indirectly amply remunerative for the additional expense they may at first entail."

He believed they could always square economies with morals. As Adam Smith taught fifty years ago, the way to get the best work out of people was to treat them well. A good many people who tried to upset Adam Smith's conclusion were unaware that he had a good deal of sentiment in his economy. The recommendations of the 1846 Committee awaited adoption. That was rather typical of the House. He might say to the President of the Local Government Board: "Now there is your mandate; get about the business and do what this Select Committee asked Parliament to do sixty years ago." If that were done, they would be absolutely satisfied. He was not one of those who complained of reasonable delay. He did not want the House to race. He had a great belief in his country, but he did not think it was strong enough to stand the House always in the division lobby, where their enthusiasm was tremendous. Already there was one case, and there might be more, where this obligation had been placed upon contractors in a public Bill. The Derwent Valley Water Act, 1899, contained the provision. The hon. Member who represented that district informed him that the administration of the Act had largely broken down, but it was not the fault of the Act. He thought at first there was a similar provision in the Port of London Bill, but, on reading the clause, he found there was an ugly little word "at" instead of "on," and he hoped the hon. Members on the Committee would see that was made "at or on." They wanted the local authorities charged with the duty of seeing that all contractors for works in their area made better provision for the housing of the men employed on those works. There were various things, a register, and other items of machinery, which might be suggested, but he did not suggest them. He told the President of the Local Government Board what they wanted, and it was his duty to see that it was carried out. They paid him a salary and did not grudge it, but they paid it him to do some of their thinking for them. If legislation was needed, then he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would pass legislation. He did not ask him to do so unless it was necessary, because he believed all unnecessary laws on the Statute book were a nuisance and even a tyranny; but, if this could not be done without legislation, then they asked the right hon. Gentleman to do it with legislation. The Motion, which he had the pleasure of moving, merely sought to impose a reasonable obligation upon all employers in the interests of a very deserving class and of the good of the general community.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent) said he had the greatest possible pleasure in seconding the Motion, for, as the officer for a number of years of the society which represented this particular class of workmen, he had been cognisant of many unfortunate circumstances, such as those already described by the hon. Member for Burnley. He was, therefore, delighted to have this opportunity of ventilating this grievance of, he should think, the most hard-working body of men in the country, and possibly one of the most useful body of workmen. The subject was not a new one, because, as the hon. Member for Burnley had pointed out, it was before the House sixty years ago. Unfortunately, despite the fact that the House sixty years ago had the matter before it, absolutely nothing had been done, so far as legislation was concerned, to take the recommendations of the Committee into consideration or to improve the position of the men in any single iota. It was true that in some circumstances there were certain regulations as to the construction of buildings, and so on, and that the general advance in the sanitary laws of the country had assisted the men in getting better accommodation; but the unfortunate part of the business was that the greater proportion of great public works, employing enormous bodies of men nine, ten, or twelve years, were usually commenced in spots where there were no local bye-laws, or only bye-laws of a very mediæval type, and in districts where there was not the jurisdiction and power to decide on housing accommodation that there was in towns. He would be able to show many cases where the conditions were quite as bad as anything described in the Report of Dr. Farrar. It would not, however, be necessary to make many quotations, because his right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board, he knew, was personally interested in the welfare of this class of men, and had been so interested for a number of years, long before he (Mr. Ward) entered the House, and possibly long before the right hon. Gentleman himself imagined he was going to hold the exalted position he now filled. He, therefore, felt it would only be necessary to state the position exactly, and to show how utterly impossible it was to hope for any improvement under present arrangements, and how necessary it was for definite action on the part of his Department. If he only showed this, he thought they would have the right hon. Gentleman's assistance in obtaining some amelioration of a definite character. The hon. Member for Burnley was mistaken in imagining that the Committee of 1846 was appointed to consider no other than railway works. It was appointed to take into consideration not merely the question of the condition of labourers employed in the construction of railways, but also on public works in general. Perhaps it would be as well for him to read the terms of reference to the Committee. The Committee was appointed on 30th April, 1846, by Sir R. Peel's Administration, and the terms of reference were :—

> "To inquire into the condition of the labourers employed in the construction of railways and other public works and into the remedies which may be calculated to lessen the peculiar evils of that condition."

The evidence in the Report clearly showed that sixty years ago they took great care in securing information as to the condition of these men in all parts of the country, on all kinds of works of public utility, and unquestionably the evidence in the Report showed a truly appalling and deplorable state of affairs. So bad was it that the Committee made a Report of a very drastic description. They in that House imagined that in discussing industrial subjects they took a more moral and higher view of the claims for industrial reform than people used to in earlier times. He used to think that the Manchester school of politics was not superior to £ s. d. and that purely materialistic motives prompted them in their decisions, but it was only necessary to read this Report to see that in dealing with subjects of this description sixty years ago they took quite as high a moral view as people did to-day, if not higher. One of the drastic recommendations he would like to read to the House. The whole subject was thoroughly discussed, and the crux of their Report was contained in the following paragraph—

> "Your Committee beg to suggest that every railway company, before employing more than a small number of labourers together in the construction of any part of their work, should be required to notify their intention to the Public Board which may be charged to the general supervision of railways and to state the number of men likely to be employed thereon. A competent officer should then be required by the Board to proceed to the place named and to ascertain whether there was already adequate and decent lodging to be obtained for workpeople within reasonable distance, and to report accordingly to the Board. If it should be sufficient that then the company should be allowed at once to proceed; otherwise, not until they have provided lodgings to the satisfaction of such officer certified by him to the Board. These proceedings should be at the expense of the company, the exercise of whose powers may be made dependent upon them being taken. The inspecting officer should be required from time to time to visit the works and the lodgings and to report thereon to the Board, with power to make sanitary regulations respecting them to be observed by the Committee on approval by the Board."

So long ago as 1846 they made elaborate recommendations for the purpose of preventing this deplorable condition of affairs that had been recently brought to light by the Report of Dr. Farrar in the case of the Brooklands motor track, and one or two others which he would bring to light. But nothing had been done. He communicated with the Administration in 1892 when his right hon. friend the Member for Morpeth was Under-Secretary to the Board of Trade, and they discussed the subject in the old Westminster Hall, taking the two sides of the grievances of the workmen, one dealing with their accidents and the other with their lodging accommodation, and he was pleased to have an opportunity of thanking his right hon. friend for dealing very satisfactorily with one side of the subject. But, unfortunately, when the right hon. Gentleman and his friends were beginning to consider the advisability of tackling this subject the result of the ballot boxes at the general election was unsatisfactory, and the powers of administration were handed over to other hands. They could see by the attendance how much care or interest they were likely to take in any question of this description. If it were not for the hon. Member for Yarmouth having come in towards the latter end of his hon. friend's speech, His Majesty's official Opposition would have been entirely absent even on such an important subject as this. Nothing was done, owing to the turn of the ballot, and so the thing had gone on from time to time. He supposed in most of these things a little personal experience was more important than theoretical knowledge. He started life on public works connected with a railway. He had worked on most of the great public works from 1879 to 1890, when he was appointed an officer of his society. He had therefore had an opportunity of personally living in these huts on different public works, and even now sometimes spent his week-ends in visiting one of these public works and lodging in the huts. The form of accommodation that was usually provided was some rough wooden structure. These huts were of a very temporary character. They were easily knocked together—too easily, he was afraid—but they afforded, at any rate, some shelter. Usually about fourteen or sixteen men were stacked in a room about 12 feet by 24, and the beds were close against one another, which sometimes enabled an odd one to be got in. If it happened to be a tunnel or works where there was a night and a day shift, no sooner were the day shift out of their beds than another shift turned in, and that was the condition of affairs that prevailed on many public works, as no doubt Dr. Farrar would be able to explain to the Local Government Board. There was another system where the contractor found it to his advantage to dispense with boards, except for the roof, and the sides were made with sods cut out of the turf on the side of the railway, and that was practically all the protection one had. Many a time he had been able to lie in bed and pick mushrooms. Their organisers had reported to him three cases where similar accommodation was provided on works which were to last five or six years. Private firms were great offenders in this matter, though great improvements had been made on several works, and he wanted to give every credit to those who had made them. Just as he was going to deal out criticisms, he should be just as clear in giving praise where praise was justified. These huts were built sometimes in long streets with scarcely any sanitary accommodation. He remembered well the great navvy village at Runcorn during the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal, where all the garbage used to be thrown out in what was supposed to be the street, the space between the huts, because there was nowhere else to throw it, until the whole space became a sort of spongy mass of filth which, of course, ought to have been cleared away. The result was a diphtheria epidemic which carried off scores of the men and nearly half the children in the village, and yet nothing had been done. But they suddenly had a great improvement. The Birmingham Corporation came to the House for powers to build a great water works, and he began to get reports from members of his society asking him to go down and see the palaces that were provided on those works. He went and found a village of about 300 fine huts with the latest sanitary accommodation, while in all other huts he had seen erected by private contractors the whole of the men had been stacked in one room without any possible chance of individual decency or anything of the sort, and that was the general thing even to-day. The Birmingham Corporation, he believed, to the honour of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, put up cubicles so that every man had his own sleeping compartment, bedsteads were provided, and the bedclothes changed every Monday, and there was wash-house and bath accommodation. Nothing like it had ever before been attempted in navvy life. He thought that that would be a pattern to every other private firm to adopt, but he was sorry to say that in the case of private firms there was no improvement whatever upon the condition that prevailed twenty or twenty-five years ago. But Birmingham led the way in this matter, and it created quite a revolution as to the management of the village, and the result was that the Water Committee got together the best body of men that any public workers ever contracted with since he had had anything to do with public works, and the works were carried on in a way which was creditable to everybody concerned. Other public bodies had followed suit. The Swansea Corporation built a large reservoir, and had a proper system of accommodation that was a credit to them. Before the work was finished another large work began, the Swansea Dock, done by a private contractor, and the policy of the public authorities was entirely ignored. No house accommodation whatever was provided, except that some old shanties in the docks or on the ground itself, that had been given over to the rats and the seagulls for half a generation, were slightly renovated and made watertight, if not wind tight, and there some twenty or thirty families had been established. Beyond that no accommodation whatever had been provided for the influx of nearly 2,000 men. He was told that whereas the cottages for the ordinary people before the works began ranged from 3s. 6d. to 4s. a week, the navvies who had families being obliged to secure some kind of accommodation, overcrowding had taken place to an enormous extent, and 10s. a week was being paid for those same cottages, in which they could only live by crowding about one family into one room, and in some cases it was even worse than that. He had drawn the attention of some officials of the Harbour Board to the subject some time ago. No less than from 200 to 300 of those men were living under the hedges on the hillside. It had been said that the navvy did not want much inducement to drink beer, but he was not so sure that he would not have taken arsenic if he had been obliged to live under such conditions. How they could expect men to develop decent habits under circumstances of that description, he failed to see. This was a very serious matter, and it was a subject which ought to have been taken into consideration years ago. He asked the constable on the spot what became of those men, and he told him that directly the cold nights set in they crowded into the filthy cabins of the town in order to get a lodging wherever they could, and they lived there in the most filthy surroundings. Was it to be wondered at that these men were looked upon as a little below the lowest class of workmen? If they placed men under those conditions and condemned them, as the Government had done by its neglect of this question during the last sixty years, to a condition of affairs of that description they could not expect the men to be angels. Public authorities, when they did this work themselves, generally made proper provision for the men, but often the private contractor made absolutely no provision at all. They ought to take steps to force the private contractor up to the standard adopted by the public authority. His hon friend had referred to the case of the Derwent Valley Water Board. That Board had the only Act of Parliament, dealing with public works of this nature, which contained a provision compelling the employer or those undertaking the work to supply proper accommodation for the workmen. His hon. friend said someone had told him that even that Act of Parliament was inoperative, and that the Derwent Valley Water Board were not carrying out that clause. He was able to say that so far as the men employed directly by the Derwent Water Board were concerned that Board were performing their duty to the letter in regard to providing the men wth proper accommodation. He had personally frequently visited the Derwent Valley Water Works, where he slept with an old friend of his in one of the huts, and it was as comfortable a little hut and as clean and perfect in every way so far as domestic comfort was concerned as any workman's house in the country. Proper sanitary arrangements were provided on those works, and there was a great recreation hall for the men, and also a library. There was also a clergyman who came to speak to the men, and he considered that that had a very important bearing on their social life. That Water Board had only erred in this way. The point he was urging was the difference in the treatment of the men in the case of public authorities, and by private contractors, and this point could not be better illustrated than in the case of the Derwent Valley Water Board. At first this Board decided to do its own work, and they employed about 800 of the best navvies in the country; they were men capable of performing any kind of work, and were a highly respectable body of men. The moment they made the habitations of these men conform to the ordinary decencies of life, they soon became much the same as other men. Unfortunately the Derwent Valley Water Board, under the influence of reactionaries, who argued that by doing their own work they were murdering private enterprise, decided by a very narrow majority that the lower part of the work should be carried out by contract. The Water Board, thinking that their model villages would be occupied by the private contractors' employees, did not dream that anyone would come and put down a miserable pigsty by the side of those decent cottages. The Board placed no compulsion on the contractor to make any provision at all for the men, and therefore that clause of the Act was a dead letter, with the result that the condition of affairs on that part of the Derwent Valley Water Works which was now being done by a private contractor, was a disgrace to the contractor, and to the county council which had allowed it to exist. He desired to convince his right hon. friend that right up to that very moment those things were continuing. The Brooklands motor track was not an isolated case, because this kind of thing occurred regularly wherever there was no compulsion in the terms of the contract. On this point he wished to read a quotation from the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* of Tuesday, 12th May, 1908, dealing with this subject, to show the condition of affairs existing at the present time. That journal said—

> "There were revelations of a remarkable character at yesterday's meeting of the Chapel-en-le-Frith Guardians, respecting the state of things in the Bamford and Derwent district where the Derwent Water Board have their extensive works. The Rev. F. M. Hayward, of Derwent, who presided, called attention to the excessive number of inmates and vagrants at the workhouse, and said he did not think the guardians had any idea of the extraordinary number of vagrants and tramps accumulating in the district of Bamford and Derwent. He said he was not speaking of the Water Board but of the contractors who were carrying out various works under the Board. Although a large number of men were continually arriving in the district and engaged on the works there was no accommodation for them. Last week seven or eight Italians arrived at Bamford to do some skilled work, and not a soul in the village would take them in. These poor beggars were obliged to sleep under tarpaulin out of doors. He knew, too, that no fewer than fifty men were sleeping in one barn, a dozen in another, the same number in another, and so on, and in fact, every haystack and pipe anywhere between Bamford and Derwent was a lodging place for these men. [Sensation.] The state of things was horrible, and they might imagine the sanitary conditions of a barn where fifty men were sleeping. Something ought to be done to compel the contractors to provide accommodation for the men they employed. They were continually advertising for men, and the result was that the locality was invaded by tramps and vagrants who did not want work, and who were trying to break into people's houses. He suggested that representations be made to the Member of Parliament for the Division, asking that a Bill should be brought forward to compel contractors in such cases to provide accommodation for their workmen. The Derwent Valley Water Board had done all they could, so far as they were concerned, but the contractors did not care whether the men were accommodated or not so long as they got their work done."

That was the condition of affairs upon one of their greatest public works. He was very glad that at last they had got to the subject which he had been agitating for a long time. For the first time these men had got a spokesman in this House, and he hoped the result would be to make it impossible for this state of affairs to prevail any longer. It might be asked why was it that private firms kept on advertising for men when there were crowds of them in the locality. This was done in order to secure a fresh stream of men continually on those particular works, and unless the contractor adopted that course he would not be able to complete his works at all. The House would see how necessary it was that something should be done to improve this unfortunate condition of affairs. He hoped the President of the Local Government Board would take the matter into consideration, and devote special attention to the need of giving powers to the county councils to take action. Such powers, however, might not be effective unless the right hon. Gentleman's Department insisted on some method by which they could carry out the proposal of the Select Committee of 1846 to have an inspector occasionally visiting the works to see that proper accommodation was provided. He also suggested that as the Local Government Board drafted model clauses with reference to many other subjects in private legislation there should be a standing order of his Department requiring that when powers were sought for building great works, involving the migration of large numbers of men to given localities, a model clause should be inserted to secure suitable accommodation for the workers before such Bills were permitted to pass.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House considers that immediate steps should be taken to secure the provision of proper sanitary Housing Accommodation for Workpeople employed upon works of construction and in other occupations of a temporary character."—(*Mr. Maddison.*)

Mr. ALBERT STANLEY (Staffordshire, N.W.) said there was one phase of this question which had not been sufficiently dealt with by the hon. Gentleman who preceded him. He associated himself with his hon. friend the Member for Burnley in assuring the House that it was not in any captious spirit this question had been raised. A great deal had been said in regard to the housing of men engaged on temporary works. What he desired to bring before the House as clearly as he could was the condition not so much of the men but of the women and children engaged in hopping. He had been brought into touch with that aspect of the question as a member of the Staffordshire Education Committee. The attendance at the schools of children who, with their parents, had been hop-picking suffered for reasons which appeared in reports which he would read. The statements he would quote were made by gentlemen who had made a close inspection of the matter on the spot. The Report dated 12th March, 1906, by Mr. Hawkins, superintendent of the attendance officers for the Education Committee of the county of Stafford contained the following —

> "The head teachers most emphatically state that the majority of children return from the hop fields in an absolutely filthy condition, and the general practice is to exclude such children from school until they have been cleansed and their clothes washed. The children are generally absent from two to three days on this account. I may add that scarlet fever broke out in the Quarry Bank district shortly after the return of the hop-pickers and has not yet entirely disappeared. The medical officer of health is of opinion that the disease was in all probability imported from the hop fields."

In schedules appended to the Report Mr. Hawkins gave the names of the children and the ailments from which they were suffering on their return from hopping. It was an unsavoury matter and he did not propose to go into all the details. The ailments included fever, diphtheria, bad throats, and bad heads. In the Quarry Bank school the effect on the attendance of these illnesses was a diminution of 20·3. It was because of that Report that Mr. Hawkins was authorised to make inquiry on the spot. Having done so, accompanied by Mr. Howitt, clerk to the Sedgley School Attendance Sub-Committee, he presented a Report, dated 28th September, 1907, in which the following passages occurred—

> "We found (on the farm of Mr. A.) a woman with a sick child. She said she would never go hop picking again, and complained that the women and children suffered very much at nights owing to cold. They could not get sufficient warmth. Proceeding to Mr. B.'s farm at B—— we inspected a shed specially built for the hoppers. This shed was divided into spaces about 10 feet by 12 feet. There was no shelter from the wet. Food was cooked by means of fires in iron cylinders, locally known as 'devils.' We spoke to a woman who said she came from a village near Walsall. It was the first time she had come, and would never come again. She was very obviously *enceinte*. She told us that a young woman, a man, his wife and three children, and herself and two children, slept together in one of the compartments above mentioned. The place was absolutely devoid of sanitary arrangements, and the people relieved nature as best they could. About 100 hoppers were sheltered here. We then proceeded to a farm in the occupation of Mr. A ——. On the way we met a girl, aged eleven years, who said she had come from Dudley. She had accompanied and was helping her sister, a girl of fifteen. Her mother was ill and could not come. We found that this girl and her sister slept in a

place about 12 feet by 14 feet with three other families. She stated that the women undressed. We called at the farm and were shown round by a labourer. We inspected the sleeping compartments, and found that most of them were about 12 or 14 feet square, the floors covered with straw and bags. The shelters appeared fairly clean, but were evidently terribly overcrowded, one, two, and three families sleeping in each compartment."

That was the condition of affairs in this hop field, and he felt that it would be almost an insult to the intelligence of the House to argue this matter. He thought the House would desire that the President of the Local Government Board should take what means he had in his power for dealing with it. Had the place to which he referred been within the jurisdiction of the Staffordshire County Council they would have endeavoured to enforce different arrangements. The degrading conditions to which men and women engaged on the hop fields were subjected were such as to call for the action of the Government. Surely there was sufficient power within the constitution of this country to deal with the state of things existing; and if the right hon. Gentleman had not got that power he was sure the House would be ready to give it to him.

*MR. PARTINGTON (Derbyshire, High Peak) said that there were two very large water undertakings in his constituency. The hon. Member for Stoke had referred to the Derwent Valley Water Board, which was in his constituency. He had had very serious protests from his constituents against the way in which the valley was being over-run by vagrants and people who went there to seek for work. The contractors for the works which were being carried out for the Water Board had erected huts for the men, which he had visited, and he found them very well kept, thoroughly clean and satisfactory. Indeed, the principal contractors took very good care of their workpeople. But he had noticed that some other contractors had been advertising for workers, with the result that the valley was over-run with undesirable people. What he would like the right hon. Gentleman to do was to send down an inspector to look into the matter and see whether something could not be done, because the resident inhabitants were getting alarmed at the number of tramps who were over-running the district. The chairman of the Chapel-en-le-Frith Board of Guardians had recently stated, "He knew, too, that no fewer than fifty men were sleeping in one barn, a dozen in another, and the same number in another, and so on, and, in fact, every haystack and pipe anywhere between Bamford and Derwent was a lodging place for these men." This question should not be treated on party lines, and something satisfactory should be done for the men who worked under very hard conditions all the year round.

*MR. MACLEAN (Bath) said he had the pleasure of the personal acquaintance of a large number of navvies, and the conditions under which they lived and did their work had been forced upon his knowledge. There was a general idea that the navvy was outside the ordinary class of artisans; but from his own experience he found that the navvy was as generous, warmhearted, and responsive to kindly and just treatment as any other member of the community could be. He thought that the class was fortunate in being represented by such a gentleman as the hon. Member for Stoke. He was not overstepping the mark when he said that that hon. Member was as capable a representative of labour as was to be found in any Legislature in the world. A good deal had been said about the personal claims of this kind of workman to the consideration of the House. It had been pointed out that this was not a sentimental question at all, that the navvy had a claim to consideration as a citizen discharging a very useful function in the State, and it was as a national asset that he should be conserved in every possible way. It was on these grounds that the Motion now before the House had been brought forward. The conditions under which the navvies worked were not a matter of history, they were going on now and required an immediate remedy. He would give a specific instance. In the district of which the village of Alton was the centre, forty miles of railway construction were being carried on. The contractors who undertook that job made, in the first instance, not the slightest provision for the accommodation of their workmen. The people in the little town were crowded out of their houses, or had to turn their stables, yards, and out-houses into sleeping accommodation for the navvies. It was only towards the closing years of the contract that some accommodation had been provided for them by the contractors. What were the conditions under which these men lived? In the first place, they were very damaging to morals. He spoke from personal knowledge when he said that owing to the crowded state of the huts many of them became no better than sheebeens where illicit drinking was carried on. That did immense damage not only to the men themselves but to the inhabitants of the district. Everybody talked of the British navvy who undertook jobs in any part of the world; and why should the House not take special measures for preserving the good character of the British navvy? But what happened? Magnificent specimens of manhood as they were, in spite of their fine physique they were attacked with pneumonia and other diseases and simply died off as the snowdrift on the dykes melted under the rays of the sun. In spite of their apparent physical power their amount of resistance to disease was extraordinarily small, and the reason was the conditions under which they were compelled to live. The remedy lay very close at the hand of the President of the Local Government Board. It was open to him and those who worked with him to see that in any Bill containing statutory powers for carrying out works model clauses were inserted for providing for the navvies proper accommodation instead of overcrowded huts. Wherever a great railway in carrying out extensions displaced working-class people, new homes had to be provided, and there was a sufficient precedent for the provision of accommodation for the workers. Of course, there would be a difficulty with small contractors. The great railway companies carried out their work usually with a fair idea of what was due to the men, and so, as a rule, did the large contractors. There were men who, like the hon. Member for Colchester, took a very active and keen interest in the welfare of the men employed. But small contractors secured small jobs because they based their tenders upon a disregard or total neglect of these moral obligations. But let every contractor be put on the same basis and under the same conditions for providing temporary housing for their men, and the thing would remedy itself. This was not a party question, and should receive the hearty co-operation of Members in all parts of the House. If the President of the Local Government Board responded to the unanimous opinion of hon. Members, this class of British citizens would have more justice done to them in carrying out their work than at present was the case.

MR. NICHOLLS (Northamptonshire, N.) said that the case for the navvy had been put in most excellent form by the hon. Member for Stoke. The best navvies came from the agricultural districts, and he thought that the navvy and the agricultural labourer were very closely associated. One of the most important points in connection with this matter was that of advertising for workers by contractors. These contractors did not recognise or endeavour to carry out their responsibilities to their men, and that was the reason for a great deal of the moving about of navvies in the districts where public works were going on. There were, of course men who did not really want work, or who would not stick to it when they got it. The best men, however, stopped where they were well treated and were given good house accommodation and had reasonable conditions of labour. He had personal experience that where the men were not well treated in the way he had spoken of they did not stay at their work more than a day or two. He himself, when he was not satisfied with the conditions of work on a farm, became a navvy. Some contractors could not keep their men when the rule was to drive them hard all day and with no care or thought of where the men went at night. Good men would not remain under such conditions. Where these works were going on there was a constant and swift influx of hands who wanted accommodation somewhere. They went to the nearest village or hamlet, which soon became overcrowded. Those villagers who held their houses on a monthly or quarterly tenancy soon got notice, and the rent was raised; to meet the increased rent they crowded in lodgers. He lodged once in a cottage of two rooms. In that cottage were the husband and wife, two grown-up daughters, a boy of eight, and four lodgers, of whom he was one. The lodgers had the upstairs room and the family the lower room, the two daughters sleeping under the stairs in what was practically a coal-hole. The man and his wife used the bed which was always in the living-room, where they all had to feed. They were not rough, but good, honest, Christian, sober people, and anxious that their lodgers should have good accommodation. The cottage was kept clean, and they were made as comfortable as possible. No woman could have done more, or have done better. But what was the result? There was nothing else to be done, the men were crowding the district, and the consequence was that men would not stop long. In the winter that crowding went on in every available shelter. In the summer time men said they could not be roasted, and so slept outside under the hedgerows and haystacks, and in the cow-sheds, and the police of the district, because they were feeling men, winked at it. How was it that someone did not come along and find out what was going on and who was to blame? The cottagers were not to blame, nor were the navvies, but somebody was. How was it that somebody did not come along when these contracts were being signed and sealed, and say that, before the work was begun and hundreds of people were brought into the district, a guarantee should be given by the contractors that shelter should be found for the workmen; that for the sake of cheapness the contractor should not be allowed to flood the district with these rough men, who would lie out because no proper accommodation was found for the best type of men? It affected the morals of the men. If a good man got into such conditions he would go down. What was a man to do on a wet day if he was not a frequenter of public-houses; where was he to go? He had either to go to a public-house or take refuge in a cowshed or other shelter. He considered that as well as housing accommodation it should not be considered a hardship for the contractor to have to provide some kind of shelter for his men on wet days. They could not go to the cottages, because the people there did not want to see them till they went in to bed. When night shifts were at work, one set of men often crept into bed half-an-hour after the others had crept out; and a man on the day shift could not go to his lodgings on a wet day because there was somebody else in the bed. On one occasion there was a public-house which had a fine room, called a club-room; that would have been a convenient place to go to, but it was a lodging-room by night, and was like a hospital ward. Forty or fifty men crowded into it at night, and they could not go there for shelter on a wet day because it had ceased to be a club-room. There should be a full inquiry into this matter, and those who inquired into it should insist upon proper conditions for these men who worked hard and long at these works. The navvies were not the roughest people; with all the fears so many persons had of them there was no ground for saying they were rough. Many of them were Christian, sober people, and many were total abstainers. What was wanted was to bring the contractors up to the mark, and if they would not do what was right he, for one, would be ready to force them up to the point.

Mr. Nicholls.

MR. W. E. HARVEY (Derbyshire, N.E.) said he should not have intervened in the debate but for the fact that one of the fairest parts of the country, in the constituency from which he came, was subjected to treatment at the present time to which it had never been used in the whole of its history. When the Derwent Valley Water Board were carrying out their scheme they recognised their responsibilities with regard to the treatment of the workmen employed by them, and made provision for the ordinary comforts of life for this migratory population. Under that work they found a model state of things, and there was no complaint either from the men or from the organisations to which they belonged.

In fact, the contractors met all the requirements of modern civilisation. Unfortunately there was now evidence of another type of contractor. Public bodies had dealt with the matter at their meetings, and there had been bitter complaints of the state of things that now existed in the Derwent Valley. The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, a Conservative newspaper, described it as a disgrace to the century. This was not the outcome of municipal or public works trading. It was the outcome of contracting, of selfish private interests, of greed. Hence there was a condition of things in which, though there might be housing accommodation, there were no sanitary arrangements, and no consideration for the well-being or welfare of the men who were doing the work, and for whom the nation was undoubtedly practically responsible. The hon. Member for Stoke had done great service for the migratory labour of the country, and he would receive the thanks of all the working people for what he had said and done that night. This was a trade union question, and one affecting the whole of the workmen of the country. In his own county he had known employers who had erected huts and created great injury by the want of sanitary arrangements. The one idea of the House of Commons ought to be that all the men employed on these works should be employed under proper conditions, whether on railways, waterworks, or in mines, and he was expecting to hear from the President of the Local Government Board an assurance with no uncertain sound that good sanitary conditions should be provided for great enterprises before the work was allowed to be proceeded with. That was only reasonable and right. He had great pleasure in supporting the Resolution.

SIR JOHN KENNAWAY (Devonshire, Honiton) said he could add nothing to the practical side of the question before the House, and as many of them had no personal experience, they were too apt to put aside what did not obtrude itself upon them. It was a happy thing that they could meet together, put aside their party differences, and think out the question how something could be done to improve the lot of the men engaged on these great public works, particularly in these days when both parties were eager to find work for the unemployed, and bring about a condition of things which should better their lot. He hoped the President of the Local Government Board would bring his knowledge to bear upon this question, and be able to say that something was being done and could be done to improve the conditions of labour in the direction that had been indicated.

*MR. VIVIAN (Birkenhead) said that, in supporting the Resolution, he would like to observe that the question was one which did not seem to attract the attention of a very large proportion of the Members. That, however, made it all the more necessary that they should be extremely careful in connection with the matter, and bring home to the right hon. Gentleman the importance of it. The question was one on which political pressure could not be brought to bear upon hon. Members owing to the peculiar position of the class which the hon. Member for Stoke so ably represented. If this had been a question affecting coal miners or cotton operators, the benches would have been crowded owing to the political pressure being so great. Here, however, was a class which, owing to their peculiar position and the kind of service they rendered to the community, were unable to organise for political purposes and to bring the necessary pressure to bear upon hon. Members. So far as navvies alone were concerned, they were dealing with a population of something like 100,000. He was sure no Member had ever listened to a more interesting debate. The realism brought into the discussion by the hon. Member for Stoke and by the hon. Member for Northants had made it very interesting, and had been very helpful. They had had able speeches from Members who understood the subject from the practical experience of life, and no one would complain of the manner in which the case had been presented. Did anyone believe that, if the conditions which had been so ably described, prevailed amongst a similar number of working class which played their part in elections, they would be allowed to last six months? The pressure on hon. Members would be so great that the House would be forced to deal with the evil. He thought that in considering social evils in the country of this kind, they ought to be not less, but more enthusiastic and anxious when they affected a large mass of people that had no political power. He did not know how far the right hon. Gentleman and his Department had systematised the enforcement by local authorities of their bye-laws in connection with the question. The question of the application of the bye-laws was a peculiar one in this case because the districts in which the bye-laws had to be enforced were changing almost from month to month. It was difficult enough to carry bye-laws out thoroughly and satisfactorily where the area was the same, and pressure could be continuous from year to year and almost from generation to generation, but here they had a state of things where the application of the bye-laws was in one district for six or twelve months and then the pressure had to be put on fifty or 100 miles away. He should like to know that some steps were taken to systematise the pressure, so far as these bye-laws were concerned, in other words to make themselves acquainted with the existence of the demand and to keep in some way in touch with this kind of population. They kept in touch with workhouses, and various other things, and one really felt that it ought to be part of the duty of certain local government officials to keep in touch with this kind of population as well, and to see that their particular needs were met by the enforcement of bye-laws. Then he thought it would be worth considering whether they ought not, as as matter of course, when Bills for carrying out large contracts came before the House, to impose some condition dealing with the provision of housing accommodation for the workers who were to be employed. That was not a revolutionary proposal, and he saw nothing that was economically unsound in it. When it was a question of preserving life and health, surely it could not be economically unsound. He drew the line in connection with economics always at the destruction of life. Here was a clear case both with regard to navvies and to hop-pickers where the evidence seemed to be overwhelming that large masses of human beings worked and lived under conditions which must be destructive to health and life. That clearly was a case for action. It was not a case of trying to get someone an eight-hour day who had at present nine, or of using the House to get 22s. or 24s. instead of 20s. It was a case of preserving life and health for a very large number of people, and it was a question of common decency. The things they had had described and the things that they imagined lay behind what the hon. Member for Staffordshire had been describing surely suggested that this was a question of common decency concerning which Members on all sides ought to unite at the earliest possible moment. When large numbers of women and children were brought together under the most demoralising and degrading conditions it was impossible to expect that these people could be really fit to fulfil the duties imposed by a civilised community. Surely it was their duty to arrest that at the earliest possible moment. With regard to the navvies, those who had had any experience of these matters—and he was not going to argue whether the tendency to strong drink prevailed largely or otherwise—knew that a more worthy, kind-hearted, generous body of men they could not find in the country, and they were frequently very fine physically as young men. But they too often deteriorated as they got towards old age very largely because of the very evils they were now endeavouring to remedy. He appealed to his right hon. friend not to let this be a mere pious resolution. They were not there to catch votes because there were no votes behind this question, but they were there to try and put a little pressure on the right hon. Gentleman to take a real step forward in the direction of removing evils which had been so vividly described by those who were competent to give a description.

*MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea): The Motion before the House refers to two different classes of people who are engaged in either nomadic or temporary occupations. The first class is that engaged in works of construction, like the navvy, whose short but simple annals have been so admirably told by their excellent representative. The other class is one whose position in life is even more pathetic than that of the navvy. It is the hop-picker, the picker of fruit, and the vegetable picker, who are composed very frequently of more helpless men, women, and children than can be said of the navvy class. I can only say on this Motion that we are prepared heartily to accept it, and I can prove conclusively that long before this Motion was tabled the Local Government Board had taken practical and in many respects drastic action to secure the object the Resolution sets out to achieve. I believe the English navvy is the finest industrial worker to be found in any country. He is strong and willing, and, considering his strength and some of the insubordinate characteristics which he at times displays, he is a good-tempered, cheerful, optimistic creature who carries on a laborious work under circumstances which have always evoked my admiration and respect. When I took office I decided to give special attention to the humbler workers of the nomadic type, and I instituted a series of inquiries by one of the ablest and most sympathetic of the Board's medical inspectors, the result of which has been the production of some admirable reports. The effect of Dr. Farrar's investigations into the circumstances attending the construction of the Brooklands motor track, the condition of the hop, pea, and strawberry picker, and also of the navvies on railway, water, and drainage works is mainly responsible for the sentiment of practical sympathy which has been shown in this debate. No one can take up Dr. Farrar's admirably illustrated Reports on the condition of the hop and fruit pickers both in Worcestershire and in Kent without admitting that the Local Government Board are beginning to bring this subject closer to practical action than it has been able to secure for a number of years. It is estimated that there are, in the United Kingdom, about 100,000 men, women, and children connected with this particular class of work. A certain number of these will always get lodging accommodation—a single man easily and readily, but the women and children not so easily. Many of these good fellows, through "sleeping rough," get into a condition in which ordinary cottagers will not take them in, and the effect of that is very often to lead them into a course of life the plane of which is invariably downwards. The letting of cottages to navvies often leads to overcrowding, and, if the work is on a large scale, the private accommodation in remote country districts is generally found to be insufficient. There is not the difficulty now in securing accommodation near large towns that there used to be, because the common lodging-houses are to-day infinitely superior to what they were. In this connection the Local Government Board may be said to have anticipated this debate by a circular issued some time ago, authorising boards of guardians to dispense with the detention period in the casual wards, thus giving these men accommodation which is not of the best, but such that many rough navvies prefer to some of the common lodging-houses, and therefore, the Local Government Board have done something in the right direction. Many contractors erect huts for navvies, but the type of hut which even the best contractor erects is never so good as the huts and the accommodation provided by the local authorities. The common type of hut is let to a ganger. The navvy lodgers are at one end, the kitchen in the centre, and the ganger and his family live at the other end. The average number is from fourteen to twenty in each hut, and the men pay from 12s. to 14s. a week for their board and lodgings, which is the same amount as was mentioned in a Report made sixty-six years ago. The navvy, however, has this advantage now, that he gets ever so much more for his money and considerably higher wages besides an enhanced purchasing power The cubic air space of the best type of hut is fairly good. The cost is not very great to the contractor and many of them are being encouraged to improve this accommodation. There are other huts erected by the ex-navvy gangers, some of which are not so good. Some are shebeens and, in many cases, they are badly conducted. Again, there are contractors who fail altogether to make provision, and at present there is no legal authority to compel them to do so. The consequence is that hundreds of genuine navvies are compelled to "sleep rough" every night.

Some of them actually sleep in the water pipes alongside the pipe track which is being laid to carry the water from one part of the country to another. One of the consequences of this is that many of these fine fellows are crippled and invalided prematurely by rheumatism contracted by the habit imposed on them of "sleeping rough" in the fields or under hutches. Apart from the serious rheumatism thus caused, the habit of sleeping rough tends to moral and physical degradation. It should be the interest of contractors to give these men better treatment. Good contractors recognise the obligation to provide accommodation because it enables them to get and to retain the best navvies. The effect of doing so reflects itself in economic and commercial advantage to them. This question, as has been truly said, is not a new one. So long ago as 1846 a Select Committee of the House of Commons made a report on the condition of railway labourers. I would like the hon. Member for Stoke not to weary in well-doing. Bad as are the conditions of the men in some of the instances which the hon. Member gave, they are not comparable with the condition of things revealed in the report of the Committee. The year 1846 was practically the beginning of the railway boom, and there were over 200,000 persons engaged in the work. These men, with their women and children, were badly housed and sheltered. They had monthly pays, a brutal truck system, hospitals were unknown, first-aid was not even thought about, and in conncction with blasting, shoring, and excavation work, the most elementary precautions were ignored. Anyone who goes through the record of industrial mortality resulting from accidents at large public works of that kind between 1846 and 1870 will find what the state of affairs was. I took the trouble to do so, and I wrote a pamphlet on this subject. What struck me was the extreme want of knowledge that prevailed then with the result that these fine fellows were neglected when accidents occurred. That Committee had to deal with a worse condition of things than we have to deal with now, and they suggested that previous to the collection of large gangs of workmen at any spot it should be ascertained if accommodation had been provided. The Committee further recommended that there should be an official inspection of all works in progress. Notwithstanding the fact that we were engaged in increasing railways at the rate often of 500 to 1,000 miles a year, no legislative effect was given to these recommendations for nearly sixty-six years. These nomadic workers had not the franchise, and if they had had the franchise, their movement from place to place would have prevented them from exercising the vote. Notwithstanding the fact that the railway boom lasted from 1840 to 1874, there was little done in the direction of carrying out the Committee's recommendations. Now the railway boom has to a great extent passed away; and it has been truly said by the hon. Member for Stoke that speaking broadly and generally the great railway companies in the treatment of their permanent way hands of the ordinary staff have got their faces towards the light, and that on the whole in this regard they do generally the right thing. Where the railway companies by their own staffs make extensions of their trunk lines or make branch lines the navvies they employ get great consideration in the matter of accommodation. This state of things prevails also in connection with other classes of public works, and yet in spite of this I find that things are not so good as they ought to be, or as good as they must be made. From the reports made to me by Dr. Farrar, who has visited railway works, docks, reservoirs, and other works, I am driven to the conclusion that we have got to do something on lines I will subsequently indicate to the House. May I say that the local authorities of thirty or forty years ago used to let contracts with less consideration for the men whom the contractors employed? Now they do this thing exceedingly well. The hon. Member for Stoke deserves credit for the attitude he took up on this particular question. What Birmingham has done in this matter is to the credit of that city. Anyone who reads the industrial reports of 1894, 1896, and 1898 of the Elan Valley village will be able to realise what can be done for these men. Similar institutions have been set up by Swansea, Leeds, and Sheffield. We must all frankly confess that the local authorities have done a great deal of good in this direction. I have only to refer to the Elan Valley as an example of what local authorities might live up to. The works there took seven or eight years and in the picturesquely situated navvy village there were hospital for accidents, mission, schoolroom, public hall, recreation room, bath house, canteen, together with a gymnasium, and other amenities. Notwithstanding that there were from 1,700 to 2,300 men in that village, the reports of the local authority and the police were to the effect that what had been done for the men had been so wonderfully humanising and civilising that there was very little drunkenness and disorder. The local authority had been more than compensated for the money spent on the excellent arrangements made at the place for the comfort and convenience of the navvies under their control. For the continuation of this good work legislation is not necessary for the local authorities if the worst of them will do what the best are now doing. That brings me to the point raised by the hon. Member who represents the Derwent Valley, and the hon. Member for Stoke. I find that Section 64 of the Derwent Valley Water Act of 1899 contains the following—

> "The Water Board or their contractors shall to the reasonable satisfaction of the medical officer of health for the County of Derby erect, fit up, and maintain hospitals or infirmaries and temporary huts or other buildings necessary for the accommodation of the servants and workmen employed by the board and their contractors, and the board shall provide and pay for all such assistance whether of doctors, surgeons or nurses as may be necessary and proper for the efficiency of all such hospitals or infirmaries."

When I read last week about the condition of affairs in Derwent Valley I decided to bring that clause in the Derwent Valley Water Board Act to the notice of the local authority, and to send down Dr. Farrar to approach both the local authority and the Water Board and point out the powers they had under this particular Act. I pass from the navvies to those employed on other public works like Blackwall Tunnel and the Rotherhithe Tunnel. There is no comparison between the way in which the men were treated some years ago and that in which they were treated in the construction of the Blackwall Tunnel, which took five or six years to complete, and on which several millions were spent. The London County Council appointed a resident medical officer of health and erected a small infirmary. No man was allowed to work in compressed air, except under well regulated conditions, and the result of taking this humane and elementary course for the preservation of the health of these men was that not one man actually died directly from the effects of working in compressed air. Twenty years ago the deaths would have been numbered by the score, and if the work had been carried out in some other countries the deaths would have numbered some hundreds. On the Rotherhithe Tunnel the Greenwich Corporation has done excellent work. I come now to the treatment of hop-pickers, fruit-pickers, and those engaged in vegetable growing. It is well that hon. Members should know what powers local authorities have in regard to these. Hon. Members have been asked by defaulting local authorities to put questions in the House, whereas if the local authorities were to put their existing powers in operation something practical might be done. For instance, Section 314 of the Public Health Act of 1875 enables any borough, urban, or rural district council to make bye-laws for securing decent lodgings and accommodation of persons engaged in hop-picking. By the Public Health (Fruit Pickers Lodging) Act of 1882, this enactment of 1875 was extended to fruit pickers. Again, Section 9 of the Housing of Working Classes Act of 1885 enables the same authority to make bye-laws for promoting cleanliness in and the habitable condition of tents, vans, sheds, and similar structures used for human accommodation. The Local Government Board have issued series of admirable bye-laws applicable to all these classes of workers, and by that means the local authorities have something to guide them in this class of work. However, I find that notwithstanding this local authorities are not doing what they should; and I have instructed Dr. Farrar to examine into the conditions under which these branches of industry are carried on, and to write a further report thereon. When his labours are concluded I trust to be able to take substantial steps for carrying out the recommendations of the Committee of 1846, and of adopting all the views which have been put forward by hon. Members to-night. But there is something the Local Government Board and the local authorities cannot do, and which is mainly the cause of the condition of things which now transpires in Derwent Valley. The hon. Member tells me that the Derwent Valley Water Board Act is a very good Act, and that the Derwent Valley Water Board have done their best to give good accommodation for those employed by them, but that men have been attracted to that part of the country in excess of the employment that can be given to them. To what is that due? It is that in certain papers which cater for navvies advertisements for hands appear longer than they should do. The result is that men are attracted to the spot where work is not to be had. I am acting in conjunction with the President of the Board of Trade in this matter, and some means will be devised that when public works have advanced a notice shall be put in the *Labour Gazette* and some other papers stating that no more men are required for these particular works. By that means much of the trouble which has been occasioned in, for example, the Derwent Valley area will be removed. I can only say that we accept this Motion. We have been doing for months something to anticipate it on its practical side. There are two alternatives before us to provide for the condition of things that has been revealed. First, there is general legislation. Well, general legislation is all very well for men whose occupation is permanent, but I am under the impression that general legislation of a fixed and stereotyped kind is not so suitable to that class of labour which is more or less variable, and which can best be dealt with by more elastic and adaptable bye-laws. The other alternative is that there should be a Standing Order of the House of Commons requiring in every private Bill authorising large works of construction a provision that the local authority should be notified thereof, and that proper accommodation should be made. At the present moment I have not finally made up my mind as to which of the two alternatives I shall take; but as soon as Dr. Farrar has concluded his report, I will submit to the House either a Standing Order or suggest an improvement in the process of administration by which what is sensible and practicable in the Report of the Committee of 1846 may be carried into effect so as to help the navvy and improve his lot. I can only say, Mr. Speaker, that if the hon. Member who moved the Motion, and the hon. Member for Stoke with whom I have been in hearty co-operation upon this particular matter, will accept my interpretation of this Motion, and will take what I have already done, which some hon. Gentlemen, through no fault of theirs, could not know, as a practical proof of the keen interest we take in this matter, then when I get Dr. Farrar's Report, and I take the course I have sketched in brief outline, we shall have gone a long way to improve the condition of the navvy and the other workmen of this country. If I can do that, then I can say that the navvy now and henceforth will be indebted to the two hon. Members who moved and seconded this Resolution, which will lead to the improvement of one of our best types of labour; labour that has built the railways and constructed the drainage and water works and reservoirs of this country; labour which is too frequently underpaid, too frequently injured and killed, without any remedy, in carrying out great public works which should have been conducted in a more humane manner. If all this is the result of our debate to-night the navvies will have cause to be grateful to the mover of the Motion for initiating in this interesting and humane discussion that has taken place on this, one of the most important branches of social reform.

AN HON. MEMBER: Will the right hon. Gentleman say when Dr. Farrar's Report will be sent in?

*MR. JOHN BURNS: In a few days.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That this House considers that immediate steps should be taken to secure the provision of proper sanitary housing accommodation for workpeople employed upon works of construction and in other occupations of a temporary character."—(*Mr. Maddison.*)

DEPOPULATION (ROXBURGHSHIRE).

*SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire), in moving—"That this House regards with concern the depopulation in the rural districts of the county of Roxburgh and other parts of Scotland, and the injurious results thereof to the national welfare, and considers that remedial legislation is urgently needed,"—said that in the short time at his disposal he would urge first that the statements made in the Motion were true, so far as the whole of Scotland was concerned, but especially so with regard to Roxburghshire, which had become a by-word for scanty population. The depopulation of the districts was chiefly amongst the class which engaged in agriculture and local work, small farmers and farm servants. Almost within the memory of the oldest inhabitant the countryside was teeming with an agricultural population, but owing to the inclosure system, and the consequent incorporation of the small farms with large ones, that condition of things had disappeared. The process was described in Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Accounts. Nearly the whole of Roxburghshire was now divided into great estates and large farms, and the classes who produced such men as Robert Burns and James Hogg were fast disappearing from the face of their native land. This result greatly imperilled the military defence of this country, because it was from the stalwart men raised in the countryside that the finest soldiers were produced. Even the amenities of life had disappeared in these lovely districts. Dykes running up the Cheviots showed that private ownership had invaded the mountain tops. Fishing was made a crime along the pleasant banks of Tweed and Teviot, of Jed and Liddell and every wimpling burn: if you tried to catch a trout, the water-baillies would catch and handcuff you. Even a pleasant walk along the stream was prohibited as a trespass. The Motion he proposed was a remedial measure dealing with the land and the people. An enormous portion of the population affected were farm servants, yet men who had been on the farm for forty years, and who had learnt every operation connected with the industry, who knew well how to reap and sow and plough and mow, who understood horses, sheep, machinery, and all the work of the lambing season, could only obtain as maximum wages 22s. a week. Conditions were made by the farmers which sometimes rendered it impossible for a man to obtain work. For instance, a man might be required to bring with him a woman worker who would receive 11s. a week, and if he had no wife, daughter, sister, or other relative, whom he could bring, he did not get work for himself. On other occasions they were told to bring a second man to work under them. Sometimes the conditions changed, and he was told there was no more need of the double kind and that if he could not get rid of the second man, both must go. What these people most desired was to have some opportunity, as time went on, to raise themselves in the world, to get a place where a man's widow and children might stay on instead of getting notice to quit the home when the shepherd or ploughman died. There was a growing feeling of bitterness, disappointment, and despair. The chief remedy was small holdings. Now that they saw small holdings being created in England and Wales, the new Act having made every county council set to work so that many thousands of farm servants were already seeking for land, the people of Roxburghshire were most anxious that something should be done for them on the same lines. He begged to move.

*MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire) said he desired to second the Motion. The proposition it contained was fully borne out by the figures of the recent Report on the Decline of the Agricultural Population. So far as Scotland was concerned, the agricultural population had declined by 40,000 in twenty years. There was enormously increased emigration and over-crowding in the towns, and the time, in his opinion, had come when some step should be taken to remedy this great evil.

It being Eleven o'clock, the debate stood adjourned.

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES] REPORT.

Postponed proceeding on Question, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of any expenses, so far as not otherwise provided for, incurred by the Commissioners of Works under any Act of the present session, to provide for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office, and for certain other public purposes,'" resumed.

Question again proposed.

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Joseph Pease,*)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

LOCAL REGISTRATION OF TITLE (IRELAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES (IRELAND) [CONSOLIDATED FUND].

Resolution reported—

"That it is expedient to authorise the advance, out of the Consolidated Fund, of any sum necessary to meet any deficiency in the Fund of Suitors in the Supreme Court in Ireland in pursuance of any Act of the present session to provide further facilities for the erection of houses for the working classes in cities and towns in Ireland."

Resolution agreed to.

LOCAL TAXATION, NATIONAL DEBT, AND ASSESSORS [PAYMENTS].

Resolutions reported—

"That it is expedient that the power to levy the duties on certain local taxation licences in England and Wales should be transferred to county councils, and that section seventeen of the Finance Act, 1907, should not apply to such duties, and that an annual sum be paid out of the Consolidated Fund to the local taxation account to be distributed amongst the county councils in England and Wales in connection with the transfer."

"That it is expedient that the surplus of income over expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1908, to the extent of £600,000, instead of being applied as provided by The Sinking Fund Act, 1875, be applied to defray expenses incurred by the Commissioners of Works in connection with public offices."

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of increased allowances to assessors of taxes."

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an instruction to the Committee on the Finance Bill that they have power to make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolution.

CHILDREN [EXPENSES].

Resolution reported—

"That it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament of any expenses that may be incurred and of any contributions that may be made under the provisions of any Act of the present session to consolidate and amend the Law relating to the Protection of Children and Young Persons."

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said that no objection ought to be raised to the vote being taken, but he did not know whether he was in order in asking whether there was any reasonable chance, with regard to the matters which had been put down for the next day, of having the Bill printed so that they might be referred to. It was after eleven o'clock, and many of them were not prepared to discuss this Resolution. They had not anticipated that it would be brought forward at that stage. It was very inconvenient that they should have to submit to this Resolution being forced on the House. Several of the matters put down for next day had not been printed.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. Member can obtain them at the Vote Office.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden) said he had given notice at about twenty to nine on the last evening that it was proposed to take this stage after eleven o'clock.

Mr. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) said he wished to point out the great inconvenience of this method.

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. Member is discussing the Resolution which was passed yesterday. He should have raised his objection then.

Mr. RAWLINSON said he was dealing with the report of the Children (Expenses) Resolution, and he had great difficulty in discussing the question because of the procedure which was inconvenient to Members, many of whom did not know it was coming on. The Government were asking for a grant of money without giving the slightest estimate or limit as to the amount required, and they were doing it at a time which was inconvenient. The right hon. Gentleman himself on many occasions in the last Parliament had protested against giving a blank cheque to the Government. There were Amendments limiting the amount which ought to be discussed, but which would not be moved. He appealed to the Government not to take matters of this kind at that time of night.

Sir F. BANBURY said he had an Amendment to leave out the words "and of any contributions that may be made," which were extremely vague. He had never heard anything which threw any light on what they meant. If they were left out the expenses which might be incurred would still be provided. He did not wish to enter into a long explanation. He would content himself with moving to omit those words.

Amendment proposed—

"In line 2, to leave out the words 'and of any contributions that may be made.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said Resolution."

***The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Herbert Samuel, Yorkshire, Cleveland)** said they had already had a discussion of over an hour's duration on this Resolution, and had gone into all the questions to which the hon. and learned Member for Cambridge University had referred—the blank cheque, the £5,000 limit and so forth—and he hardly thought the House would desire to repeat them. The Amendment raised a different point, but it was merely a drafting point. The hon. Member proposed that the Resolution should authorise any expenses which might be incurred, but not any contributions which might be made. The difference between expenses and contributions was purely a verbal one. "Contributions" was inserted because under the Bill it was proposed to enable them to be made for industrial and reformatory school children who might be emigrated, and it was, perhaps, doubtful whether "expenses" would cover these contributions. Contributions for emigration were to be made in accordance with the recommendation of a Departmental Committee presided over by a Member of the late Government.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member move the next Amendment, of which he has given notice?

Sir F. BANBURY did not think it was any use. Perhaps it would be more convenient to submit to the greater strength of the Government, but he must raise a protest against this way of conducting business.

Resolution agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. J. A. PEASE, in moving the adjournment of the House, said that to-morrow after eleven o'clock the Government proposed to take the Report stages of three money Resolutions:—Old-Age Pensions, Irish Universities, and Public Offices Sites.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."—(*Mr. J. A. Pease.*)

Sir F. BANBURY said that the hon. Gentleman must not expect that the worm would not sometimes turn. There were things which flesh and blood could not stand. If they had three Resolutions every night after eleven o'clock it might possibly be necessary to discuss them.

Question put, and agreed to.

Adjourned at twenty-one minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Thursday, 28th May, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Skegness Urban District Council Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Marriages Provisional Order Bill.—"To confirm a Provisional Order made by one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State under The Provisional Order (Marriages) Act, 1905," presented by Mr. Herbert Samuel; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 251.]

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time tomorrow.

Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time tomorrow.

Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time tomorrow.

London County Council (Money) Bill; Great Western Railway Bill [Lords]; Swansea Valley Gas Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Reports to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP G.).

Mr. ARTHUR STANLEY reported from the Committee on Group G. of Private Bills; That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Tuesday next, at Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Brighton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

COAL MINES (EIGHT HOURS) (No. 2) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Billinge; Edge Green; Golborne; Haydock; Park Lane; and West Bromwich; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Shettleston, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From North Hunts; and New Alresford; to lie upon the Table.

Eight Petitions from Blaenavon, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Aberfeldy; Ashton in Makerfield; Bedminster; Birmingham (three); Bridgend; Brighouse; Chadwell Heath; Dalkeith; Derby (twenty-six); Earlestown; Forres; Glanvilles Wootton (two); Glasgow; Harringay; Haydock; Kingswood; Kirkintilloch (two); Loanhead; Nantyglo; Shaftesbury; Sheffield; Stockton and Thornsby; Stratford; Westminster; and Weston-super-Mare; to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Lanark, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Glasgow (two); Grand Division of Scotland of the Order of the Sons of Temperance Friendly Society; Kilmarnock (two); and Morningside; to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS BILL.

Petition from Westminster, against; to lie upon the Table.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS (ROYAL COMMISSION).

Copy presented, of Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Ormonde, K.P., preserved at Kilkenny Castle. New Series. Volume 5 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE MARKS.

Copy presented, of Twenty-fifth Report of the Comptroller-General of Patents, Designs, and Trade Marks, with Appendices, for the year 1907 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 156.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

School of Military Engineering, Chatham —Case of J. W. Davidson.

MR. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that John William Davidson, who served for over fifty years as a civilian clerk in the School of Military Engineering, Chatham, and who is now in his sixty-eighth year, has been discharged without any pension, although he has no means of his own with which to support himself, on the grounds that his fifty years service was merely a temporary engagement, and that he had no Civil Service certificate; and, if so, whether Mr. Davidson, having entered the service of Honourable East India Company in 1855, is entitled to superannuation under The Government of India Act, 1858; is he aware that he had served twelve years before any intimation was given him that his appointment was temporary; and further, that the War Office have acknowledged that his failure to receive a certificate was due to an inadvertence on their own part; and, if so, what steps will now be taken to remedy the injustice that he appears to have suffered.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) Mr. Davidson was discharged with a gratuity of £188 13s., but without a pension, because the Treasury after repeated consideration was satisfied that he was not entitled to one. The Treasury is not in possession of any evidence showing that Mr. Davidson has any claim under the Government of India Act, 1858, but any inquiry on that point should be addressed to the India Office. I do not know whether he had served twelve years before any intimation was conveyed to him that his appointment was temporary, but no explicit assurance was at any time given to him that he would be entitled to a pension, and any erroneous impression which he may have been led to form on the point was corrected as long ago as 1868. I cannot admit that the omission to obtain for Mr. Davidson a Civil Service certificate or other formal evidence of a title to pension was due to inadvertence on the part of the War Department, seeing that, so recently as 1895, an increase of salary was applied for and granted to him on the express ground that he was not entitled to pension.

Yeomanry and Volunteer Officers.

COLONEL IVOR PHILIPPS (Southampton): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he will state how it is proposed to deal with officers of the old Yeomanry and Volunteers who, though willing to join the new Territorial Force, are in excess of the strength of the squadrons or companies administered by their own County Association, though not in excess of regiment or battalion strength.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It is not proposed to refuse any such offer from officers of the Yeomanry and Volunteers who are willing to join their new unit of the Territorial Force subject to the total establishment of the regiment or battalion not being exceeded. The actual posting of such officers for duty with squadrons or companies must be a matter for the local military authorities to decide, on the recommendation of the commanding officer and according to local conditions.

Bexhill Postal Wage Scale.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): To ask the Postmaster-General whether the staff at Bexhill have been informed by the postmaster of Hastings that they are in Class 5, with a maximum of 40s.

per week; whether he will state the figures of the cost of living and the units of work upon which this classification was based; and whether he will state the reason of the disparity of a maximum salary of 40s. at Bexhill and a maximum of 52s. at Hastings.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) Bexhill-on-Sea has been placed provisionally in Class 5 for the purpose of the scales of pay of the indoor force. Its final position in the new classification is now being considered.

Franco-Canadian Treaties.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will lay upon the Table of the House copies of the letters patent appointing plenipotentiaries for the negotiation of the Franco-Canadian Treaties of 1893 and 1907 respectively.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) The plenipotentiaries for the conclusion of the Commercial Convention between France and Canada of 19th September, 1907, were Sir Francis Bertie, His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, the Hon. W. S. Fielding, and the Hon. L. P. Brodeur. They were not appointed by letters patent, but were furnished with full powers under the Royal Sign Manual similar, *mutatis mutandis*, to those furnished to the late Marquess of Dufferin and Ava and to Sir Charles Tupper in 1893. It is not usual to lay instruments of this kind before Parliament, but I will put copies in the Library if desired.

Charleville Evicted Tenants.

Mr. LUNDON (Limerick, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have sent inspectors to interview Mr. Robert Sanders, of Charleville, County Cork, with a view to the restoration to their evicted farms of Messrs. M'Grath and Barry on the Cooper estate, Knocklong, County Limerick, and of Messrs. Harty, Burke, and Ryan, on the Erasmus Smyth estate, Newpallas, County Limerick, and, if so, with what results; and has Mr. Sanders himself, in his capacity of agent on both estates, taken any steps to bring about a happier state of affairs.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners' inspector has had interviews with the agent of this estate and the representative of the town tenants, with the object of bringing about an arrangement for the purchase by these tenants of their plots. The Commissioners have only now received the inspector's report on the matter, and will consider it as soon as possible. In the meantime details cannot be given.

Colonel Gasgoine's Kilfinane Estate.

Mr. LUNDON: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland can he say whether the Estates Commissioners have lately sent an inspector, a Mr. Howard, to Kilfinane, County Limerick, to negotiate a sale and purchase as between Colonel Gascoigne and his town tenants; has Mr. Howard interviewed the agent, Mr. Cecil Vandeleur, and the representatives of the tenants, and, if so, with what results; and are arrangements concluded between Colonel Gascoigne and the rural tenants on the property.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have decided that the evicted tenants named in the Question are suitable to work land, and their cases have been referred to an inspector with the object of providing them with their former or other holdings if possible. The inspector has not yet reported the result.

British Imports.

Sir EDWIN CORNWALL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give details of the kinds and descriptions of the wholly manufactured articles which were imported into this country in a state ready for consumption in the years 1906 and 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The following statement gives the information asked for by my hon. friend—

List showing as far as possible the Descriptions of Goods imported into the United Kingdom in 1906 and 1907 which were introduced in a condition completely manufactured and ready for consumption. (The list is the same as that adopted for the purpose of the Return, No. 190, of session 1907)—

Description of Article.

Apparel: waterproofed by any process; not waterproofed: of wool or of wool mixed with other materials; of other materials. Arms, ammunition, and military and naval stores: ammunition: shot and shell; propellants: cordite and other smokeless propellants; gunpowder; high explosives: dynamite and other high explosives; small arms ammunition; fuses, tubes, primers, etc.; percussion caps; metal cartridge cases other than small arms ammunition—filled; empty; rockets and other combustibles for warlike purposes, explosives, and ammunition of natures not named above. Arms: cannon: guns, howitzers, mortars, and parts thereof; automatic machine and quick-firing guns and parts thereof; gun-mountings and carriages and parts thereof. Small arms: rifles, carbines, muskets, and fowling-pieces; revolvers and pistols; swords, cutlasses, bayonets, and arms of other sorts not firearms. Torpedoes and submarine mine appliances. Military, naval, and ordnance stores, and appliances not enumerated above. Art, works of, other than pictures. Baskets and basketware. Bead trimmings. Blacking and polishes (containing no spirit or sweetening matter). Books, printed. Brooms and brushes. Buttons and studs (not of metal). Candles. Caoutchouc manufacture: boots and shoes; other sorts. Carriages, waggonettes, cart, etc.: cycles, other than motor cycles; motor cars; motor cycles; other descriptions. Chinaware or porcelain and earthenware: porcelain, china, and parian earthenware (including semi-porcelain, majolica, and glazed hearth and wall tiles, jet Rockingham, and glazed terra-cotta ware); red pottery, stoneware, brown and yellow ware. Other sorts (including electrical ware door fittings, and chemical ware). Clocks. Cordage, cables, ropes, and twine of hemp, coir, or like material. Cork, manufactured. Cotton manufactures: hosiery of all sorts; lace, and other articles thereof; unenumerated. Curios. Cutlery. Drugs, quinine, and quinine salts. Electrical goods and apparatus (other than machinery and telegraph and telephone wires): electric wires and cables, insulated: rubber insulated (other than telegraph and telephone cables); insulations other than rubber (not being telegraph and telephone cables). Telegraph and telephone cables; telegraph and telephone apparatus; electrical goods and apparatus unenumerated. Embroidery and needlework: made by hand; made by machinery. Fancy goods (known as Paris goods). Flowers (artificial). Glass, bottles. Glass, manufactured, other sorts. Hair, manufactures of (other than mohair). Hardware: hollow-ware, enamelled; hollow-ware, not enamelled; other than hollow-ware. Hats and bonnets, trimmed or untrimmed: felt; straw; other sorts. Implements and tools and parts thereof. Jewellery. Jute, manufactures of, other than cordage, cables, ropes, and twine, but including piece goods, sacks, and bags. Lace and articles thereof, unemunerated. Lamps and lantern (except electric). Leather manufactures: boots and shoes; gloves; unenumerated (except belting for machinery). Linen manufactures, including manufactures of linen mixed with cotton, linen predominating. Machinery and mill-work, or parts thereof: steam engines; locomotives; agricultural; other descriptions, not being steam engines or electrical machinery: agricultural; sewing machines; mining; textile; other descriptions; electrical, of all kinds. Matches, safety. Matches, other sorts. Mats and Matting. Metals, manufactures of: brass, bronze, and metal, bronzed or lacquered, manufactures of: copper manufactures, unenumerated. Rails: new perfect rails for railway use, both steam and electric, and conductor rails for electric traction; tram rails with grooved heads for tramways worked by horse or by mechanical power. Tubes, pipes, and fittings, wrought; pipes and fittings, cast; iron and steel manufactures, unenumerated; zinc, manufactures of; metal unenumerated, wrought or manufactured. Musical instruments: organs and harmoniums; pianos; all other musical instruments. Oil cloth for floor coverings; for furniture coverings; for all other purposes. Oil-seed cake, containing non-dutiable ingredients: cotton-seed cake; linseed cake; rape-seed cake; other sorts. Paper: printed paper hangings; other printed or coated papers. Perfumery and articles used in the manufacture thereof (except perfumed spirits). Pictures and drawings by hand; Pipes of all sorts, for smoking tobacco. Plate of gold. Plate of silver, gilt or ungilt. Prints, engravings, photographs, maps, and charts. Scientific instruments and apparatus (other than electrical). Ships and boats (new). Silk manufactures: wholly of silk: lace and articles thereof; ribbons, silk or satin; ribbons, velvet, plain, or figured. Mixed with other materials, silk predominating: lace and articles thereof; ribbons. Other kinds of manufactures, mixed or not with other materials, silk predominating. Skins and furs, manufactures of (including skin rugs). Soap: powder; household; toilet; other sorts (including cotton-seed oil soap. Stationery (other than paper). Straw envelopes for bottles. Toys and games. Watches. Wood, manufactures of, furniture and cabinet ware. Woollen and worsted manufactures (of wool or of wool mixed with other materials, wool predominating): hosiery; carpets; rugs; mohair braids and laces; unenumerated; goods, unenumerated, manufactured.

Unemployed Trade Unionists.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): To ask the President of the Board of Trade what was the percentage of members of trades unions, other than coal miners, returned as out of work in each of the months of 1908 and in the corresponding months of 1907.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I may remind the hon. Member that the figures for this year have been affected by disputes in the shipbuilding and engineering trades. Percentage of members of trade Unions other than those engaged in coal mining reported to the Board of Trade as unemployed at the end of January, February, March, and April, 1908 and 1907:—

	1908. Per cent.	1907. Per cent.
January - -	7·6	5·2
February - -	7·8	4·8
March - - -	8·4	4·4
April - - -	9·2	4·0

The figures for 1908 have been considerably increased by the indirect effect of the disputes in the engineering and shipbuilding trades.

Submarine B 4.

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether Submarine B 4 was in collision in August, 1906, was beached, and then dry-docked for extensive repairs.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) There is no trace of this collision in Admiralty records.

Naval Casualties.

MR. BELLAIRS: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the destroyers "Earnest" and "Lively" were in collision in 1906 during night exercises; and, if so, what was the nature of the damage.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) This collision was not reported at the time to the Admiralty, but on inquiry it was found to be of a very minor nature and occurred during the manœuvres, and did not prevent either vessel from continuing on their duties. The "Lively's" log mentions the fact, and that it proceeded immediately afterwards at 10 knots.

H.M.S. "Dreadnought."

MR. GRETTON (Rutland): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any boiler tubes burst on board H.M.S. "Dreadnought" during 1906; and whether any men were injured.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The reply is in the negative.

Submarine B 3.

MR. GRETTON: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether Submarine B 3 was in collision at the end of 1906 with a coal hulk; whether the Admiralty carried out any repairs or paid any damages to the owners of the coal hulk; and why was this collision omitted from the Return ordering all collisions to be included.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) There is no trace at the Admiralty of any papers on the subject of such a collision.

H.M.S. "Terrible."

Mr. GRETTON: To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in addition to the omission of the breaking of the "Terrible's" propeller shaft from the Return of casualties to ships on the Navy List, the "Terrible" at a later date in 1906 sank a caisson while being hauled across the basin at Portsmouth into No. 13 dock.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) This accident was considered to be not one for inclusion in the casualty return.

Damage to Cables off the Kerry Coast.

Mr. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) whether his attention has been called to the published statement of the diplomatic representations made by the United States Government on the subject of the breaking of the submarine cables off the coast of Kerry by trawlers; whether he is aware that these trawlers carry on operations within the prohibited limits, and, in addition to the damage done to the cables, have inflicted serious loss on the local fishermen; and whether, with a view to safeguarding the interests of the fishermen and of the cable companies, nine of whose cables are laid in a space of one and-a-half miles in Ballinskelligs Bay, he will endeavour to secure protection from the operations of these trawlers in this district.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The alleged damage to submarine cables by steam trawlers has been brought under the notice of the Department. The protection of cables is not the direct work of the Department, who have, however, taken all steps that are reasonably possible to secure the due observance of their fishery bye-laws.

Cattle Disease in Foreign Countries,

Mr. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board of Agriculture at present give immediate official information of outbreaks of contagious cattle disease in foreign countries, and in what form; and, if not, whether the Board of Agriculture will consider the advisability of approaching the Governments of foreign countries with the object of establishing some system of international notification of these diseases.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey*). We receive either by letter or telegram reports of outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease or cattle-plague from Consular officers in countries from which the importation of animals into Great Britain is not prohibited. Monthly Returns of disease are also sent us by consular officers, and we receive official Returns of disease from countries which issue them.

"Rex v. Dyson."

Sir BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): To ask Mr. Attorney-General if his attention has been called to the remarks made by the Lord Chief Justice in the case of the King *v.* Dyson, pointing out a serious difficulty which has arisen in connection with the Court of Criminal Appeal; and whether he proposes to amend the Act.

(*Answered by Sir William Robson*). I have seen a report of the remarks in question. The difficulty pointed out by the Lord Chief Justice, due to the fact that the Court had no power to order a new trial, was foreseen and debated during the passage of the Criminal Appeal Act, and it was then decided that on the whole it was undesirable to let a prisoner be subjected to more than one trial. The working of the Act is being carefully watched, but I cannot say that any amendment on this point is likely to be proposed.

Cost of Appeals for Petty Sessions.

Mr. G. GOOCH (Bath): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether he will endeavour to secure a change in the law by which costs incurred in an appeal to Quarter Sessions from a conviction by a magistrate, involving imprisonment up to one month, shall be paid in whole or in part from public funds in cases where the conviction is quashed and the innocence of the appellant is established.

(*Answered by Sir William Robson*). The suggestion made in this Question is one that involves a considerable charge on the public revenue, as to which I could not venture to pledge the Government, but the point will be considered.

Scottish Inquests.

Mr. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): To ask the Lord-Advocate whether he is aware that inquiries under The Fatal Accidents and Sudden Deaths Inquiries (Scotland) Act, 1906, are held in a perfunctory manner; whether his attention has been drawn to the verdict of the jury in an inquiry held on 15th April last into the death of Robert Anderson, carter, which verdict did not set forth the cause of the accident nor whether anybody was guilty of negligence, and did not state whether any precautions were necessary to prevent another accident of a like nature; whether he will take any, and what, action with regard to this particular inquiry; and whether he will take steps towards having the property qualification to serve on these juries removed, or otherwise enable workmen possessing knowledge and experience of the subject-matter of an inquiry to serve on the jury.

(*Answered by Mr. Thomas Shaw*). The Reports as to the working of this Act do not support the suggestion that the inquiries under it are carried out perfunctorily, but on the contrary a large number of important suggestions have been made by juries, the value of which has been widely recognised. My hon. friend may be assured that I am keeping the administration of the Act under special observation. I have considered the proceedings in the particular inquiry referred to in the Question. These appear to have been carefully conducted, full evidence being laid before the jury. There seems to have been no proof of negligence on the part of anyone, and there is therefore no finding of fault in the verdict; nor is there any suggestion by the jury of precautionary measures which might be taken in order to obviate accidents in similar circumstances. I doubt whether an extension in the direction desired by my hon. friend of the obligation to serve on juries would be welcomed; but I may point out to him the provisions in Section 2 of the Act of 1906, entitling the jury to hear any person duly authorised by any trade union of which the accused was a member, which, I think, may to some extent meet the point he has in view in the latter part of the Question.

Indirect Taxation—Proportion derived from Alcohol and Tobacco.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the amount of indirect taxation which it is estimated will be collected per head of the population in the year 1908–9; and what portion of this is due to taxation on alcohol and on tobacco, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George*). The indirect taxes in 1908–9 are estimated to amount to £1 6s. 11d. per head of the population. The amounts estimated to be due to taxation on alcohol and on tobacco respectively are 16s. 1d. and 6s. 3d. per head.

Cloch Point War Office Lands.

Mr. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer with reference to the land at Cloch Point which was selected for defence purposes in 1899 and purchased for £13,050 in 1905 and re-sold for £10,000 in 1907, whether that land formed part of any estate on which Estate Duty was paid between 1899 and 1905, and, if so, what was taken as the principal or capital value of that land for Estate Duty purposes under Section 7 (5) of The Finance Act, 1894.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George*). I regret that I am unable to answer my hon. friend's Question. The records of the Estate Duty Office do not enable me to say whether Estate Duty has been paid on a particular piece of property during a given period.

Estate Duty on Licensed Houses.

Mr. BOULTON (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if there is any special basis provided by statute for valuing licensed houses for the purpose of Estate Duty; and, if not, does the valuation of licensed houses for this purpose come under the general rule applicable to all property, and which is laid down by subsection (5) of Section 7 of the Finance Act, 1894, namely, the principal value of any property shall be estimated to be the price which in the opinion of the Commissioners such property would fetch if sold in the open market at the time of the decease.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George*). The Answer to the first part of my hon. friend's Question is in the negative, and to the second in the affirmative.

Shannon Bridge Barracks.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state when the military barracks near Shannon Bridge, in county Roscommon, were last occupied by military, the rent of those buildings and ground attached, and the annual cost of up-keep; whether those buildings are used for any purposes by the Government; and, if not, whether he will take steps to avoid the expenditure which is involved in retention and preservation.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) I have nothing to add to the reply which I gave to an almost identical Question put by the hon. Member on 27th February.

Clonmeen Evicted Tenant.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have caused any further inquiries to be made respecting the case of T. E. Barrett, who was evicted sixteen years ago from his holding on the Grehan estate, Clonmeen, Banteer, county Cork, for the non-payment of a rack rent; are the Commissioners aware that this holding is untenanted and in the landlord's own possession; and whether, under the circumstances, they will proceed to exercise their power under the Act of 1907, with a view to the reinstatement of this tenant.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners propose to exercise their compulsory powers under the Act of 1907 in this case, and a notification to that effect will shortly be issued.

Irish Universities Bill—Position of Existing Professors.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what arrangements will be made as to pensions for those professors of any college who may feel compelled to withdraw in consequence of the altered character of that college resulting from the Irish Universities Bill.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Existing professors will be appointed to equivalent posts in the reconstituted colleges, and will have the same tenure of office secured to them as that under which they now hold. There can be no substantial reason why any professors should feel compelled to withdraw. If anyone should decline office he will, in accordance with precedent, have no right to compensation for the loss of his office. No such right was given when the Aberdeen colleges were united in 1858, or when the Queen's University, Ireland, was abolished in 1879.

Inspectors of Irish National Education.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state how many of the six inspectors of national education in the Belfast districts have a sufficient knowledge of the Irish language to qualify them to examine in this subject.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education inform me that the answer is two.

Belfast National Schools.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state in how many cases did Mr. J. Keith, inspector of national schools, Belfast district, lower the prestige of schools by giving reports during his first year in that district inferior to those given by his predecessor; and in how many such cases had the two preceding reports given by his predecessor or predecessors been such that if Mr. Keith had given a similar Report the teachers would have been entitled to promotion.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Commissioners of National Education consider that it would be against the interests of the public service, and detrimental to the efficiency of their inspection staff, to make any statement with regard to questions of this character.

M'Kay Estate, Lough Fern, Donegal.

Mr. C. MACVEIGH (Donegal, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, in view of the fact that deficiency of staff is no cause of delay in completing land purchase, why it is that no inspector has yet been sent to the M'Kay estate at Lough Fern, county Donegal, although agreements were signed by these tenants on 1st May, 1904; whether he is aware that this delay, in addition to other losses, prevents the tenants from leasing valuable sporting rights; and whether he will take steps to see this sale carried through without further delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The purchase agreements in this case were lodged on 9th October, 1905. The Estates Commissioners will not be able to deal with the case for some time yet, having regard to the many cases still undisposed of in which agreements were lodged at an earlier date.

Castletownroche Evicted Tenant.

Mr. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork County, N.E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners has been directed to the case of Ralph Ladd, an evicted tenant on the estate of Major Eustace, Castletownroche, County Cork; and what is the cause of delay in bringing about his reinstatement, seeing that the farm in question is in the possession of the landlord, who has accepted the price offered by the Commissioners, and that terms of purchase have been agreed upon by the other tenants on the estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The former holding of Ralph Ladd forms part of the estate of Major Eustace, which has been offered for sale to the Estates Commissioners. The estate has been inspected, but the Commissioners are unable to make a formal offer for it or to take possession until the statutory requirements as to title have been complied with by the vendor. The Commissioners endeavoured to arrange that Ladd should be given possession of the holding by the owner until the Commissioners should take over possession of the estate, but Ladd was not in a position to give the security required by the owner for the payment of the necessary interest pending the completion of the sale.

Blake Estate, Galway.

Mr. JOHN O'DONNELL (Mayo, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that dissatisfaction exists on the Blake estate, Ballindereen, County Galway, over the way in which an inspector named McGill acted in connection with the striping of the farms; that he gave a piece of land about 30 acres to a man named William Forde; that when the boundaries were pointed out to Forde he observed that there was no water on the farm, but that within a few yards there was a sufficient supply; that the tenant asked for a right of way to this water supply and offered any necessary portion of the land allotted to him in lieu thereof; that the inspector refused to entertain his application and cancelled the arrangement previously made; that the holding as parcelled out by McGill would be useless as there was no water on it; that since then Forde has been left without an additional perch of land, although his holding is poor in quality and uneconomic, so much so that he was given the holding already described; and whether, seeing that this man was victimised by an official because he pointed out the necessity for a water supply, he will have full inquiry made into the matter and a holding of land given to Forde as quickly as possible.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that the only dissatisfaction of which they are aware in connection with the division of the Blake estate is that which exists on the part of William Forde. In July last this man agreed to surrender his holding of 12½ acres, consisting of six separate parcels, and he was to receive in lieu thereof a new holding of 39 acres, which he specially asked for. In January last he was asked to sign an agreement for the new holding, but declined to do so, and stated that he would remain as he was. The Commissioners thereupon allotted the new holding to Forde's cousin, and they cannot now reopen the matter. The Commissioners understand that Forde was dissatisfied with the plot offered to him because there was not attached to it a right of way to a watering place in the landlord's demesne.

County Inspector Rogers, Royal Irish Constabulary.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether County Inspector Rogers, Royal Irish Constabulary, who acted violently against many people at Watergrasshill, county Cork, is listed for promotion; whether he is aware that this inspector has family connections at Dublin Castle; and whether in future he will see that, in order to put an end to the dissatisfaction which exists amongst Catholic officers in that force, all vacancies will be filled by public competitive examination under the control of the Civil Service Commissioners.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) If a vacancy should occur in one of the higher posts of the Royal Irish Constabulary, the claims and qualifications of County Inspector Rogers, as well as those of other county inspectors, will be fully considered. The Inspector-General informs me that there are no grounds for the statement that Mr. Rogers acted violently at Watergrasshill, and he is not aware that this officer has any family connections at Dublin Castle. Promotion to the rank of assistant inspector-general by means of Civil Service examinations would be quite impracticable.

Belfast Police Force.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Inspector-General, Royal Irish Constabulary, the three assistant inspector-generals, and the town inspector of Belfast are Protestants; that six out of thirty-seven county inspectors and fifty-nine out of 180 district inspectors are Catholics; that only 2,000 of the rank and file of that force are Protestants and over 8,000 Catholics; that the proportion of Protestants occupying high positions, in comparison to the number of men of that religious persuasion at present serving, shows that impartiality in the selection has not been strictly observed; and whether he will look into the matter closely and order a public inquiry into all the methods adopted in connection with the question of promotion in that body.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The facts are substantially as stated in the earlier parts of the Question, though the figures are not quite correct. I am satisfied that religion is in no way an element in the promotion of officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and I see no reason for holding any inquiry into the matter.

Promotion of Inspectors in the Irish Constabulary.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that one of the county inspectors passed over in the recent appointment of commandant at the Royal Irish Constabulary depot is a musketry instructor with the Hythe certificate; that County Inspector Foley is the officer who was instrumental in discovering the methods of Sergeant Sheridan in the manufacture of outrages in county Clare; that neither County Inspector Foley nor District Inspector Irwin, who assisted him in bringing to light such nefarious work, were ever in any way rewarded for their meritorious services in connection with this case; and whether his connection with this case was the reason for passing over this county inspector for the commandantship and giving it to a man who was connected with the shooting of persons in county Mayo.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Mr. Ball, who was recently selected to fill the post of commandant and assistant inspector general at the depot was junior on the list of county inspectors to Mr. Foley. The latter officer holds a certificate of musketry from the Hythe

School. It is the fact that County Inspector Foley reported his suspicions regarding Sergeant Sheridan, but the main investigation of the case was undertaken by other officers. All the officers concerned simply performed the duties assigned to them, and the case was not one to call for any special reward. There is not the slightest foundation for the suggestion that Mr. Foley was passed over because of his connection with the case of Sergeant Sheridan. As I have already informed the hon. Member, Mr. Ball was appointed to the post because he was considered to be the officer best fitted for it.

Sir Compton Domville's Aughamore Estate.

Mr. JOHN O'DONNELL: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the estate of Sir Compton Domville, situate in the parish of Aughamore, Claremorris Union, was offered to the Congested Districts Board so far back as November of last year, but that no monetary offer has been made by that body for it, although it is eminently suitable for the enlargement of holdings, having within its confines about 500 acres of grazing lands; whether he is aware that there is a feeling of unrest in the locality owing to the want of information on the subject; and whether any effort will be made by the Board to acquire that estate with a view to the enlargement of the holdings of the ninety tenants, nearly all of whom are in a very much congested condition; and, if not, whether he will ask the Estates Commissioners to take the necessary steps towards purchasing the estates and thereby preventing any further unrest.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The estate in question was brought under the notice of the Congested Districts Board, but they were obliged to defer consideration of the question of purchasing it owing to want of funds for improvement purposes. The estate has not been offered for sale to the Estates Commissioners, but if it should be offered they would make inquiries with regard to it. Otherwise they could take no action in the matter.

Pasteurisation of Milk in Ireland.

Mr. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he could state how many of the Irish local authorities had accepted the offer of Mr. Nathan Strauss to supply plant for the Pasteurisation of milk; and whether the Local Government Board is taking any action with regard to this offer.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board are not aware that any local authority in Ireland has accepted the offer. Under the existing law a sanitary authority has no power to expend the rates in maintaining Pasteurising plant. It appears to have been one of the conditions upon which the offer was made that the plant should be so maintained.

Cavan Land Sub-Commission.

Mr. VINCENT KENNEDY (Westmeath, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say when the last Sub-Commission sat at Cavan for Cavan Union land cases; have the decisions been given yet; how many fresh cases are now listed for the same division; and when will the next sitting be likely to be held.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The last sitting of a Sub-Commission at Cavan took place on 10th December, 1907. In twenty-two cases then heard, the decisions have not yet been given owing to the fact that the lay assistant commissioner has been employed on special duty under the Local Government Board. He will resume duty on 1st June, and the outstanding cases will then be disposed of. Nineteen fresh applications have been received from the district, and these will be listed for hearing as soon as possible, regard being had to the claims of other districts.

Calcutta Appeal Court.

Sir H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he has now received any information regarding the actual facts in the appeal case before the High Court of Calcutta, in which it was alleged that a district Judge, differing in opinion from both of the assessors in a murder case, had passed a sentence of death, that the counsel who appeared for the condemned man was stopped by the High Court before he had finished his argument, that the Crown Prosecutor then said that he could not support the conviction as the sessions Judge had implicitly believed the defence story, and that therefore the prosecution was bound to fail, and that the High Court then dismissed the appeal and confirmed the sentence of death; and whether the death sentence was actually carried out.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The papers forwarded by the Government of India show that both the assessors found the prisoner guilty of murder, and that there was no difference of opinion between them and the sessions Judge; that the prisoner's counsel addressed the High Court for upwards of an hour, and sat down of his own accord; and that the Crown Prosecutor made no statement in the sense alleged. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, on a consideration of all the circumstances, commuted the sentence to one of transportation for life.

Glasgow Telephone Employees.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Postmaster-General whether it is the intention of his Department to dispense with the services of ex-corporation telephone employees at Glasgow whose duties on the commercial side may become redundant as a result of the transfer of the corporation telephone system to the State, or if it is proposed to retain in some established capacity capable officers including night operators and contract officers and any employees whose position may be affected by any possible redundancy of duties; and whether, in view of the fact that a reasonable time has elapsed since the taking over of the Glasgow Corporation telephones, he can state when the establishment of ex-corporation telephone employees on the commercial side is likely to be completed.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The hon. Member may rest assured that the question, which is of a very intricate nature, is being carefully considered, and will be settled as soon as circumstances permit. In the meantime I am not able to furnish details of the proposed arrangement.

Post Office Savings Bank Depositors.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the total number of depositors in the Post Office Savings Bank, and the total number of deposit books forwarded to the head office for inspection, during the last financial year for which this information is available.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) On 31st December, 1906, the number of accounts remaining open in the Post Office Savings Bank was 10,332,784; and the total number of deposit books forwarded to the head office for inspection during the year 1906, was 7,632,903. The figures for 1907 are not yet proved.

Irish Commissioners for taking Affidavits.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether he can state what qualifications are necessary for persons seeking to be appointed Commissioners for taking affidavits for use in the High Court of Justice in Ireland; whether his attention has been called to the fact that in some cases Dublin agents of country solicitors take affidavits in business connected with their agencies, that solicitors who are commissioners take affidavits in business transacted in their offices, and that law clerks who act as commissioners take affidavits in cases pending in the offices of their employers; and whether he will cause instructions to be issued on these matters.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) I have referred this Question to the Lord-Chancellor, who informs me that no qualification is prescribed by statute for the appointment of Commissioner for taking affidavits in Ireland, except in the case of the Dublin Commissioners, who must be solicitors, and who are required by the Lord-Chancellor to have been in practice for a period of at least three years prior to their appointment. The rules of the Supreme Court provide that no affidavit shall be sufficient if sworn before the solicitor for the party on whose behalf the affidavit is to be used, or before the partner, agent, correspondent, or clerk of such solicitor. No case of a violation of this rule by a Commissioner has come under the notice of the Lord-Chancellor. It would be open to the party against whom such an affidavit might be used to object to its sufficiency or the breach of duty by the Commissioner could be brought under the notice of the Lord-Chancellor.

Shorthand Writers' Fees in Criminal Appeals.

Mr. TALBOT (Oxford University): To ask Mr. Attorney-General whether arrangements have now been made, in accordance with the rules passed under the Criminal Appeal Act, for the employment of shorthand writers in the various Courts of Assize and Quarter Sessions; what remuneration is proposed to be given to them; what relief is to be provided in the event of Courts sitting late; and whether opportunities will be secured to the Judges and presiding chairmen of revising the reports of their summings up.

(*Answered by Sir William Robson.*) Arrangements have been made in accordance with the rules passed under the Criminal Appeal Act for the employment of shorthand writers in the various Courts of Assize and Quarter Sessions. A scale of of remuneration has been settled by the Treasury. The question of what relief is to be provided in the event of the Courts sitting late may have to be considered in the light of experience. It does not seem altogether desirable to give opportunities to the Judges and presiding chairmen to revise the reports of their summing up.

Fermanagh Horse Show.

Mr. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) if he is aware that at the last show of the Fermanagh Farming Society the classes for agricultural and hackney stallions were cancelled; if so, were the members of the committee consulted; is he is aware that the society is at present in serious financial difficulties; and whether, in view of this fact, he will cause the annual grant to be withheld until full inquiry is made into the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. T. W. Russell.*) The last show of the Fermanagh Farming Society was held on 31st July, 1907. Prizes were not offered for hackney stallions either at this show or at the show held by the society in 1906. Prizes were offered for agricultural stallions in 1906, but not in 1907. The schedule of prizes for the 1907 show was approved by the County Fermanagh Committee of Agriculture at the meeting held on 5th April, 1907, and was afterwards sanctioned by the Department. The audited balance sheet for 1907 shows that after an expenditure of £380 had been met a sum of £22 16s. 6d. only was due to the treasurer of the society, which cannot be regarded as indicating that the society is in serious financial difficulties. The shows held by this society have been well conducted, and have served the needs of farmers residing within a very large district. There appear to be no grounds for instituting inquiry into the affairs of the society, or for withholding the subsidy (£106) which has already been provisionally allocated in aid of the forthcoming show by the county committee, with the approval of the Department.

Irish Paupers and Old-Age Pensions.

Mr. J. DEVLIN: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether in the Old-age Pensions Bill provision will be made for the inclusion in its benefits of workhouse inmates in Ireland of over seventy years af age.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) Perhaps the hon Member would be good enough to wait for the circulation of the Bill.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Rosyth—Morayshire Stone.

Mr. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he has received communications regarding the suitability of stone from quarries in Morayshire for harbour work at Rosyth naval base; and whether this stone will be placed upon the approved list.

The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKenna, Monmouthshire N.): I have received a communication regarding the suitability of stone from quarries in Morayshire for harbour work at Rosyth. The practice of the Admiralty is to specify the quality of the stone they require, and firms tendering submit such samples as they think fit, to comply with the specification. There is therefore no list of quarries approved by the Admiralty, but offers of particular stone should be made to the contractors who are likely to tender.

British and Foreign Naval Construction.

Mr. PARTINGTON (Derbyshire, High Peak): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he can give the amount of tonnage and its cost added, by new construction, to the British, United States of America, French, and German navies for the five years ending 31st March, 1908.

Mr. McKENNA: This information is being prepared and will be published in the Return moved for by the hon. Member for Leicester, which is expected to be ready in about a fortnight.

Naval Casualties.

Mr. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the Return of casualties to ships ordered by this House requires the Admiralty to include all cases of collision or grounding and casualties to engines; and whether he can state why the order was not complied with in the Return issued during the Recess last autumn.

Mr. McKENNA: The Admiralty is aware that the Return required the inclusion of all cases of collision and grounding and casualties to engines, and that in fact all the information available at the Admiralty and considered to come within its scope was included therein, with the exception of an accident to the machinery of H.M.S. "Terrible," which was inadvertently omitted.

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, whether, in order to comply with the Order of the House in reference to the Return of Casualties to Ships issued last autumn, which asks for all cases of collision or grounding and casualties to engines, he will cause to be circulated with the Votes all casualties which were omitted from the Return in question.

Mr. McKENNA: My hon. friend has already been informed in reply to another Question that there was only one case inadvertently omitted from the Return he refers to.

Mr. BELLAIRS: Does the right hon. gentleman state definitely that there was no case of collision or grounding of any kind omitted from the Return except the case to which he refers?

Mr. McKENNA: No, Sir. I stated last week that no collision or grounding of a kind necessitating no repair was included.

Mr. BELLAIRS: May I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether a Minister is entitled to defy an order of this House directing him to include in a Return all cases of collision or grounding?

*Mr. SPEAKER: I understand that, with the exception of one case inadvertently omitted, all cases that came to the notice of the Admiralty were included.

Mr. BELLAIRS gave notice that, on the Vote for the salary of the First Lord of the Admiralty, he would draw attention to omissions from the Return.

Earl WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): How was it the omission occurred in the one case?

Mr. McKENNA: It was the case of the "Terrible." The records and papers regarding that accident had been sent away from the Admiralty for the purpose of an inquiry, and it was while they were away that the Return was compiled. It was quite an inadvertent omission.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): Are we to understand that when a Return has been ordered of all casualties occurring to H.M. ships, including collisions and groundings, the Admiralty are entitled to include only those which involved repairs?

Mr. McKENNA: "Groundings" and "collisions" are very vague words. Two ships may collide and nothing happen to either. In that case it is not reported to the Admiralty.

Mr. BELLAIRS: The right hon. Gentleman has spoken of cases where no repairs were needed. But there are some such cases in this return, including the "Terpsichore" to which no damage at all was done, although some paint was removed.

***Mr. ASHLEY** (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether a Norwegian vessel was run into by a destroyer in the manœuvres of 1906 and was towed into harbour in a sinking condition; and, if so, whether he can state why the collision was omitted from the official return for 1906, ordered by the House and issued in September 1907.

Mr. McKENNA: There is no trace in Admiralty records of any collision of a destroyer with a Norwegian vessel duriug the manœuvres of 1906.

***Mr. ASHLEY**: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, whether the destroyers "Cheerful" and "Garry" were in collision at the beginning of the manœuvres of 1906; and whether the "Cheerful" was able to take any further part in the manœuvres.

Mr. McKENNA: There is no trace of any official report of this collision.

***Mr. ASHLEY**: Had not one of these vessels to be dry docked?

Mr. McKENNA: Not in consequence of any collision.

Earl WINTERTON: May I ask whether, after this collision, these two vessels were in a state of fighting efficiency?

Mr. McKENNA: Certainly.

***Mr. ASHLEY**: Then why had one to be dry docked?

The Mohmand Rising.

***Mr. MACKARNESS** (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the fact that on the 24th instant Sir J. Willcocks attacked a force of Utman Khel on the Indian frontier with cavalry and artillery, and inflicted extremely severe loss upon them, that this attack took place after an envoy from the tribesman had come to the British camp asking for terms, and that the British general refused to hold any intercourse with him; and will he say what instructions have been given to the general as to dealing with terms offered or asked for by the tribesmen. The hon. Member prefaced the asking of this question as it was printed on the Paper by appealing for the ruling of the Speaker as to the principle on which a Question ought to be altered in its phraseology by the Clerk at the Table. He said that he had handed in the Question in quite a different form from the above. What his original Question asked was whether the attention of the Under-Secretary had been called to a published statement to the effect that these things had happened and whether there was any truth in the statement. This had been struck out of the Question, and he was made to impute conduct as a fact to Sir James Willcocks which he had been specially anxious to avoid.

***Mr. SPEAKER** asked the hon. Member why, if he had any objection to the form of the Question, he did not make his objection on the previous day. The Question appeared on the Paper the previous day, and if the hon. Member had any objection to it he could have come to him and raised the point at that time.

***Mr. MACKARNESS**: I had understood that the practice was for the Clerk at the Table to send a card to the hon. Member whose Question he wished to alter and ask him to call. I received no such invitation.

The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.): The statement on which the Question appears to be founded is that an emissary who said he had come from the Nawab of Nawagai to discuss terms shortly before the engagement with the Utman Khel on the 24th was not received by General Willcocks. No mention of this episode is made in the official reports of the occurrences of that date. I would point out that the Utman Khel are a Mohmand tribe over whom the Nawab of Nawagai has no jurisdiction. It may, I think, be taken for granted that if an authorised emissary from the section concerned had come to negotiate for submission, General Willcocks would have suspended operations in accordance with his instructions, the purport of which I stated to the House on the 26th, and which he has hitherto carried out with success.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): Is there any justification for the underlying assumption in the Question to the effect that British Generals in India prefer to kill the tribesmen?

MR. BUCHANAN: The underlying assumption is what my hon. friend wishes to disclaim.

*MR. MACKARNESS: May we assume that there is no truth in the statement published as to the conduct of the General?

MR. BUCHANAN: As far as we are aware there is no foundation for the statement.

*MR. MACKARNESS: Mr. Speaker, that is precisely the contradiction which I wanted.

Canadian Secretary of Imperial and Foreign Correspondence.

EARL WINTERTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has received any official information as to the creation by the Canadian Government of an office of Canadian Secretary of Imperial and Foreign Correspondence; and, if so, will he state what are the exact functions and *status* of this official.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (COLONEL SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): The Secretary of State has no information beyond what has appeared in the Press.

EARL WINTERTON: Will the hon. Gentleman inquire if it is a fact that this official has been appointed?

COLONEL SEELY: If such a step has been taken no doubt we shall be duly informed. If it has been it is nothing unusual, for a similar arrangement has been made by the Australian Commonwealth.

Native Labour in British East Africa.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies what decision has been arrived at with reference to the supply of Native Labour in British East Africa; and whether the vacancies in the Governor's Council have been filled; and, if so, by whom.

COLONEL SEELY: The rules of 18th November, 1907, as to the terms on which the Government of the Protectorate will endeavour to supply labour will be maintained in substance though modifications of details will be considered. The vacancies in the Legislative Council to which the hon. Member refers have not yet been filled.

East African Native Land Settlements.

MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he is aware of the fact that, when in East Africa, the late Under-Secretary for the Colonies made a speech to the natives assuring them that sufficient land would be secured to them and their children's children for all time; and if such declaration expressed the views of His Majesty's Government.

COLONEL SEELY: Yes, Sir; the Answer to both Questions is in the affirmative, except that my right hon. friend informs me that the expression which he used was not "children's children," but "children."

East African Labour Regulations.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he could ascertain if the labour regulations, recently brought into force in East Africa, were submitted for the consideration of the late Under-Secretary for the Colonies; and if he expressed any views thereon.

COLONEL SEELY: I understand that the late Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies expressed his approval of the objects, principles, and general character of the regulations in question, and that he regarded effective action in regard to native labour as urgently necessary in the interests of the natives.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if the labour regulations have been brought into force by the Governor to protect natives against harsh and unjust treatment; and if he can state on what points Lord Delamere and Mr. Bailey, the members of the Council suspended by the Governor, considered the regulations unfair.

Colonel SEELY: The chief object of the regulations is as stated by my hon. friend. Papers on this subject will shortly be laid, in which the views of all parties are set out in their own words.

East African Legislative Council.

Mr. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will consider whether it would be desirable after the recent occurrences at Nairobi to dissolve the Legislative Council of East Africa until such time as there are a greater number of actual white settlers in the country.

Colonel SEELY: The Secretary of State sees no reason to take the step which my hon. friend suggests: the members of the Council are not elected by the white settlers but are appointed by the Crown.

Russia and Persia.

Major ANSTRUTHER-GRAY (St. Andrews Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state the amount of the indemnity claimed by the Russian Government through their General from the Governor of Tabriz for alleged damage done by Persians in Russian territory; and whether any portion of this indemnity will be exacted from British subjects or to the detriment of British interests at Tabriz or elsewhere.

The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): I have no information as to the amount of the indemnity claimed nor any reason to believe that British subjects or British interests will be affected by the claim in any way.

Royal Visit to Russia.

Mr. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if the approaching Royal visit to the Czar of Russia has any official or diplomatic significance; if it is intended to manifest an alliance between the Governments of Russia and that of Great Britain; and if an official visit from the Czar is expected in return.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The visit to Reval will be an official visit paid by the King to the Emperor of Russia, as has been paid previously to other Sovereigns or Heads of States. The relations between the two Governments are those manifested by the Convention, which has been laid before the House. No new Convention or Treaty is under discussion between the two Governments, nor is it intended to initiate any negotiations for one during the visit. I have no further information whatever with regard to the last part of the Question.

Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, is the forthcoming visit of His Majesty to the Czar of Russia to be of a private nature only, or will it have any attributes of an official or representative character implying national recognition of the Czar's Government.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The visit will, I trust, contribute to good relations between the Governments and peoples of both countries, but I cannot give any better definition than is given in the reply to the previous Question.

German Gunboat and Grimsby Trawler.

Sir BERKELEY SHEFFIELD (Lincolnshire, Brigg): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can give any information as to a recent case where a Grimsby trawler was apprehended by a German gunboat; and whether the allegations against the skipper have been substantiated or not.

Sir EDWARD GREY: The British Vice-Consul at Cuxhaven has reported the seizure of a Grimsby fishing-boat, the "Taurus," by a German torpedo-boat on a charge of fishing in German territorial waters. I am informed that the master and mate of this ship were subjected to a judicial examination before the local

Court at Cuxhaven on the 16th instant, and as neither could sufficiently clear himself of the charges brought against him, the master was kept under arrest pending his transfer to Flensborg for trial by a higher Court. Both men have, however, now been released on bail. The fish and fishing-gear of the "Taurus" were confiscated by the German authorities, but the ship has now returned with the master and mate to Grimsby.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether, in fact, the trawler was or was not within German territorial waters?

SIR EDWARD GREY: The men have been released on bail. I shall be kept informed of what the evidence given at the trial is, but until the trial it is impossible to say what evidence will be brought forward.

MR. WILLIAMSON (Elgin and Nairn): Does Germany claim territorial waters beyond the three-mile limit?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have not heard that the German Government ever claim more than three miles, but certainly our principle is that we only recognise three miles of territorial waters.

Consular Reports.

MR. BRIGG (Yorkshire, W.R., Keighley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he will remind the Consuls and Vice-Consuls in Foreign countries to give the statistics which are quoted in their Reports in English equivalents.

SIR EDWARD GREY: His Majesty's Consular Officers were reminded of the instructions in question as recently as the 8th ultimo.

International Naval Conference.

MR. G. GOOCH (Bath): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the invitations to the Naval Conference to be held in London in the autumn have been issued; whether the subjects of discussion have been finally settled; whether it will be open to any Power to raise the question of the capture of private property at sea in time of war; and whether the House will have an opportunity of discussing the programme of the Conference before it takes place.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Invitations have been issued. The desire of His Majesty's Government is to discuss certain points on which it is essential for us that we should have an agreement with the chief naval Powers before ratifying the Prize Court Convention. The most important of these points are the rules of blockade and contraband. The capture of private property at sea is not included in this category. I cannot say what subjects other Powers may desire to raise, but it is desirable that the discussion should be concentrated on the points specially relevant to the Prize Court Convention. It is not proposed to submit any programme to the House for discussion.

S.S. "Zambesi."

MR. BOWLES: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has now received any further information as to the forcible boarding of the s.s. "Zambesi," and the intimidation of her master, in the Surrey Commercial Dock on the 9th instant; and, if so, whether he will lay that information upon the Table or state its purport to the House

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): In consequence of a communication I received from the "Zambesi's" owners reflecting on the accuracy of my statements in answer to the hon. Member on May 14th, I have had further inquiry made into all the circumstances of this incident, and have obtained detailed statements from reliable eye-witnesses, including the Deputy-Superintendent of the Surrey Commercial Docks and officers of the Dock Company's police, who were present alongside the ship while the incident was taking place. Though the police officers were standing quite close to the ship in uniform no appeal for help was made to them, and they saw nothing to call for their intervention. The result of the inquiry has therefore been fully to confirm my former statement. I do not propose to lay any Papers on the Table.

MR. BOWLES: And, in view of the evidence he has obtained, does the right hon. Gentleman still maintain there was no intimidation or violence?

MR. GLADSTONE: Certainly.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): Is it not the fact that the owners and master of this vessel tried to get a crew of Chinamen in detriment to the British seamen?

[No Answer was returned.]

Ladders in Ships' Holds.

MR. GEORGE ROBERTS (Norwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the dock regulations with regard to ladders down ships' holds for shipping and unshipping at fore and aft and thwart ships' hatch beams are being generally ignored; and whether, in view of the fact that the three years allowed for compliance with such regulations expired on 1st January of this year, and as there has been no uniform system of ladders applied yet, and in the majority of cases no attempt made to comply with the regulations, he will take steps to secure some kind of uniformity in the carrying out of such regulations.

MR. GLADSTONE: The requirements of the dock regulations, Nos. 6 and 8, to which I understand the Question to refer, have been receiving the continuous attention of the staff for some time past. Early in last year a circular was issued by me to shipowners calling attention specially to these points, among others; and I am informed that, though irregularities are still found, it is not the case that regulations 6 and 8 are being generally ignored. There is no power under the regulations to require any particular system of ladders to be uniformly adopted; what the regulation prescribes is that safe means of access by ladders or steps from the deck to the hold shall be maintained. If the hon. Member will communicate to me any cases that have come to his notice in which the regulations are not being observed inquiry shall be made.

Railways and Agricultural Produce.

MR. CLYNES (Manchester, N.E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has seen a report of an action in the Wisbech County Court respecting a consignment of fruit which, when delivered, was deemed to be unfit for consumption; whether the evidence of a stationmaster that the railway practice was for each company to try to get the largest share possible respecting rates for home-grown produce regardless of any loss which the delay entailed might inflict upon farmers, fruit-growers, traders, and consumers is evidence which calls for any action by his Department and whether he contemplates taking any early step to facilitate and cheapen the transit of home-grown food now burdened by heavy carriage rates and railway methods.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): I have not seen any report of the case referred to. As my hon. friend is probably aware, the Board of Trade are considering with representatives of various interests concerned a number of questions relating to railway facilities and methods of working.

MR. CLYNES: Have the Department any record of the extent of the losses incurred by reason of the practices referred to in the Question?

MR. CHURCHILL: I do not think we have.

Brewers and the Sugar Tax.

MR. RAPHAEL (Derbyshire, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state the amount of the saving which will be effected by the brewery companies by the proposed reduction of the tax on sugar.

MR. CHURCHILL: I must refer my hon. friend to the reply given on the 13th instant to the hon. Member for Lincoln by my hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury, of which I am sending him a copy.

Clyde Pilotage.

MR. JOYCE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the case of a pilot licensed by the Clyde Pilotage Board, who was tried on the 15th instant in the sheriff's court and heavily fined for wilful breach or neglect of duty, causing risk of collision between the s.s. "Maracas," of which the pilot was in charge, and H.M.S. "Harrier"; whether he is aware of the circumstances of that case, namely, that the Clyde Pilotage Board had, at the request of the Admiralty (conveyed through the Board of Trade), already fully investigated the case and exonerated the pilot from all blame, and that the captain and officers of the ss. "Maracas" were not available as witnesses owing to the lapse of time before proceedings were commenced against the pilot, and that the case was tried and determined by the sheriff alone and without nautical assistance, and was determined practically upon the evidence of the naval officers, to whose evidence only that of the pilot himself was opposed, such circumstances leading to a miscarriage of justice; and whether, under the circumstances, he will grant a special departmental inquiry into the facts of the case.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I have no information as to the proceedings before the Glasgow sheriff beyond a report of the case which appeared in the public Press. The Board of Trade have no power to review the decision of a Court of law, and I am therefore not prepared to order a special inquiry into the facts of the case.

Import Duty on Hops.

Mr. MENZIES (Lanarkshire, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what proportion of the 63,000,000 pounds avoirdupois of hops used in the production of beer during the last Inland Revenue year was imported; what amount of duty would have accrued to the Treasury if a 40s. duty had been in operation; what effect this duty would have had on the price of home-grown hops; and whether the combined effect of the duty and increased price would have tended to increase the price of beer.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I have no information as to the proportion of imported hops actually used by breweries in any one year, but I may say that the net imports of hops into the United Kingdom during the year ended September 30th, 1907 (after deducting re-exports) amounted to about 25,900,000 pounds. What amount would have been imported if an import duty had been in operation or what the effect of such a duty on prices would have been are hypothetical questions of opinion, and I see little advantage in attempting to deal with them in the compass of a Parliamentary Answer.

Milk Imports.

Mr. BRIGG: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will furnish the quantity in gallons of new milk which is daily imported into England, and give the names of the ports at which it is received.

Mr. CHURCHILL: In January, 1908, the average quantity of fresh milk imported daily into England was 150 gallons; in February, 150 gallons, and in March, 48 gallons. There were no importations in April or May to date. The whole of this milk was imported at Southampton.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): In the view of the Board of Trade, at what age does milk cease to be fresh?

Mr. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye): Can the right hon. Gentleman say what preservatives are used to keep the milk fresh?

A NATIONALIST MEMBER: Hops.

Mr. CHURCHILL: Of course, the freshness of milk is a very important consideration, but these are questions of detail in regard to which I must ask for notice.

Sir GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): From what countries does this imported milk come?

[No Answer was returned.]

Unclaimed Balances in Joint Stock Banks.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he has any, and, if so, what objections to asking the joint stock banks of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales to supply for the information of Parliament statistics as to the value of the unclaimed balances appropriated by the banks during the past hundred years; whether, having regard to the fact that the value of unclaimed Government stock and dividends has amounted to millions of pounds, there is any reason to doubt that the unclaimed balances in banks also amount to an enormous total; and whether he can state if the banks are in the habit of annexing after a period of six years these sums to which they have no moral claim.

MR. CHURCHILL: I have no statutory power to call compulsorily for information from banks as to the accounts of their customers and any partial information obtained by voluntary inquiry might be misleading. My information is to the effect that banks are not in the habit of treating unclaimed balances as their property after the lapse of six years, but that they regard themselves as continuing debtors to the customers or their representatives.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: Have not the Board of Trade jurisdiction over these joint stock banks, and, if that is so, what difficulty is there in asking them to supply information, not as to customers' accounts, but as to unclaimed balances?

MR. CHURCHILL: I am informed the Board of Trade have no such power. I give that opinion on legal authority.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, College): Is it within the power of the right hon. Gentleman to see that the banks make an effort to find the customers?

[No Answer was returned.]

MR. J. MACVEAGH: You will want the money for old-age pensions presently.

Midland Railway Directors and Men's Right of Representation.

MR. BELL (Derby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that the Midland Railway Company are dismissing several men who have been elected by their fellows either as deputations to represent their grievances to the directors or on conciliation boards, in accordance with the terms of settlement on 6th November, 1907; whether he is aware that a platelayer at Kentish Town, named W. Charter, a member of a deputation to represent that class, has been served with notice of dismissal from his employment, and for presiding at a meeting held on Sunday last to protest against this a passenger-guard, named W. Carter, has been suspended; and whether, in view of the terms of settlement of the agitation last year, he will take steps to prevent such conduct on the part of the officials of that company.

MR. CHURCHILL: I am in communication with the Midland Railway Company in this matter and will inform my hon. friend of the result.

Amalgamated Society of Engineers.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that, according to the last monthly report of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, there were 102,723 members of that society in the United Kingdom at the end of April; whether the whole of this membership is comprised in the total under the head of engineering to whom the Board of Trade unemployment Returns relate; and whether he can state what other branches of the engineering trades are included in the Board of Trade total.

MR. CHURCHILL: The figures given with regard to the membership of engineering trade unions making returns do not include such of the members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers as are either superannuated or apprentice members or members of branches directly affected by disputes or so-called "trade protection members," not entitled to unemployed benefit. All other members of this society are included. Twenty-three other trade unions are also included in the statistics, mainly pattern-makers, iron and brass founders, and machinists.

Territorial Force—Wages to Employees of Local Authorities during Training.

MR. MARNHAM (Surrey, Chertsey): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether local authorities will be liable to be surcharged by the auditors of the Local Government Board if they grant a week's holiday to their weekly servants to enable them to attend the training of the Territorial Force, and pay their wages during such holiday.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): No special power is given to local authorities to pay the wages under the circumstances referred to. Whether they can do so in any particular instance depends on whether the employee is entitled under his contract of service to receive wages during his absence on a holiday. Speaking generally, it is competent for local authorities so to arrange the terms of the contracts with their employees that this should be the case.

Working Class Dwellings in Oldham.

MR. CLYNES: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been drawn to a report presented to the last meeting of the Oldham Trades and Labour Council showing that, largely on account of extensive mill building in recent years, there is a great scarcity of suitable dwelling-houses for the working classes in the Oldham district, and alleging that more than 10,000 persons live in a condition of overcrowding, and that many insanitary evils and a higher rate of infantile mortality have thereby resulted; and whether he can take action to press upon the local authorities of the district the necessity of immediately exercising municipal powers at present unused to ensure a better supply of suitable houses and the erection of other premises on more methodical and improved lines.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I have seen a newspaper account of a meeting of the Oldham Trades and Labour Council, held within the last few days, at which the report mentioned was read. I do not gather whether the report has been sent to the Town Council of the borough, but if not this should be done at once. I will communicate with them on the subject to which it relates. I may add that if the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill now before Parliament becomes law, Part III. of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1890, which enables local authorities to provide houses, and which at present is only adoptive, will be put in force throughout the country, and a statutory complaint can be made to the Local Government Board if the local authorities fail to exercise their powers under that Part in cases where they ought to have been exercised, and the Board would then be empowered to take action.

Pay of Postal Employees.

MR. CLAUDE HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he will issue a statement showing how he has applied the recommendations of the Select Committee on Postal Servants to those classes of postal employees not included in the terms of reference to the Committee.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I hope to be in a position to make an announcement on this subject shortly. The number of classes whose cases had to be considered was very great.

MR. CLAUDE HAY: Will it be before the Estimates are taken?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I hope so.

Postal Employees and the Territorial Camp.

MR. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that members of the Post Office staff who wish to carry out their period of field training in the Territorial Army have to find substitutes to carry out their official duties, and that in many cases this involves their paying the wages of substitutes of a higher grade than that to which they themselves belong; and whether, in view of the hardship thus imposed on the more patriotic members of the staff of the Post Office, he will take steps to remove this bar to enlistment in the Territorial Force.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am in communication with the Treasury on the subject of the regulations which they have laid down in regard to granting leave to Civil Servants who are members of the Territorial Army to enable them to attend training in camp. I hope to receive the reply shortly.

EARL WINTERTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that considerable inconvenience is being caused Civil Servants who are in much doubt as to what will happen this year?

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am also in doubt, but I hope before long to receive an answer from the Treasury.

Mr. HICKS BEACH: Several men have already gone into camp and they are suffering the inconvenience.

Royal Gardens, Kew.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether gardeners employed in the Royal Gardens, Kew, enter the service at Kew as skilled workmen; whether they are paid less than unskilled workmen at Kew; whether the rate of sick pay has recently been reduced by one-half; what is the percentage of these gardeners who obtain appointments in the Colonies and in India; and whether His Majesty's Government have laid down the 23s. minimum rate for unskilled Government labourers in the London district.

The TREASURER of the HOUSEHOLD (Sir Edward Strachey, Somerset, S.): The young gardeners at Kew to whom, as I understand, the hon. Member refers, must have had four years training in good gardens or nurseries before their selection. They are engaged for a definite and limited period of two years and they enjoy various privileges during their period of employment, and are allowed a subsistence allowance of 21s. a week. The labourers at Kew are paid from 23s. to 24s. a week. The rate of sick pay of all the workmen at Kew was revised last year in order to conform with the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906. About 22 per cent. of the young gardeners obtain appointments in the Colonies and India. Perhaps the hon. Member will address his concluding inquiry to my hon. friend the Secretary to the Treasury.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the facts he has given are inaccurate?

[No Answer was returned.]

Boy Clerks in the Civil Service.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will now announce the particulars of the new proposals of the Treasury, which have been under consideration for more than a year, respecting the employment of boy clerks in the Civil Service.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Hobhouse, Bristol, E.): I have nothing to add to the reply given to the hon. Member on the 5th instant.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that this subject has now been under the consideration of the Treasury for nearly two years?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: Yes, Sir.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Can he give some indication when a decision will be arrived at?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: No, Sir.

Assistant Clerks.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in considering the claims of the assistant clerks (new class) to improved conditions of service, he will also take into consideration the position of the senior or old class of assistant clerks, many of whom have reached the maximum salary of the class, with the view of granting some improvement in their pay and prospects.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I fear that it will not be possible to effect any improvement in the position of the assistant clerks of the old class.

Mr. CLAUDE HAY: Why not?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: It would require considerable explanation, but these clerks have had very considerable advantages since they have been brought into the Service.

Unclaimed Bank Balances.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, having regard to the fact that the Government is the most important customer of the Bank of England, he will ask the Governors to supply him with figures showing the amounts received by the Bank of England from unclaimed balances during the past 100 years.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: The holders of Government Stocks are creditors of the nation, and the nation accordingly benefits if they forego their claims. In the case of bank deposits, the transactions affect only the depositors and the banks.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH asked whether the hon. gentleman would take no steps to ascertain what was the amount retained by the Bank which they had no right to retain.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I have to be persuaded that they have no right.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH asked whether it was not a fact that, if the money belonged to anybody, it belonged to the State and not to the Bank, and, if that were so, why did the hon. gentleman refuse to ask the Bank what money they had obtained from these sources.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I do not admit the position at all.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: Surely if the hon. gentleman will send a polite letter to the Governors of the Bank of England they will at least send him a polite reply?

Mr. HOBHOUSE: It would probably be a polite refusal.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: Surely the hon. Gentleman does not think——

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman has got the same answer three or four times.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH gave notice that, on the Vote for the hon. gentleman's salary, he would call attention to this matter.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can explain why unclaimed Government Stock and dividends thereon are deemed to be national property, whilst unclaimed balances in banks are deemed to be the property of the banks.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: No, Sir.

Friendly Societies Act.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a Select Committee in 1889 reported that the Friendly Societies Act requires amendment, extension, and strengthening; whether he can state what legislation has since been passed in that direction; and whether he can say to how many of the thirty-three recommendations of that Select Committee effect has meanwhile been given.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: The Answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The following are the Acts passed since 1899 dealing with friendly societies:—52, 53 Vic. cap. 22; 56, 57 Vic. cap. 30; 58, 59 Vic. cap. 26; 59 and 60 Vic. cap. 25; 59 and 60 Vic. cap. 26. In 1891 a Bill was introduced to amend the law relating to industrial assurance; it was ordered to be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade before which it was in part discussed. It was finally withdrawn in June.

Moray Firth Fishery Investigation.

Mr. WILLIAMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if scientific investigations of the fisheries in the Moray Firth have been attempted; and whether the presence and operations of trawlers have interfered with the results of these investigations.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): Scientific investigations were conducted in the Moray Firth, but the investigations originally contemplated—involving a comparison between a protected area and the open sea—have been rendered ineffectual by the presence of numbers of foreign trawlers in the Firth.

Foreign Trawlers in the Moray Firth.

Mr. WILLIAMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether negotiations have yet been commenced with foreign Powers with regard to restricting trawling by foreign vessels in the Moray Firth, in view of the scientific work in that area.

Mr. SINCLAIR: No, Sir. At present I am unable to add to my reply of Monday last on this subject.

Mr. WILLIAMSON: How long is this to go on?

Mr. SINCLAIR: No time is being lost in dealing with the matter.

Deputations on Scottish Bills.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will grant the Return on the Paper relating to the expenses of deputations respecting Scottish Bills.†

MR. SINCLAIR: If my hon. friend will repeat his Question after the Whitsun recess, I will in the meantime make inquiry into the practicability of obtaining such a Return.

Scottish Chief Constables.

MR. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland how many chief constables there are in Scotland who have risen from the ranks in that profession; what class of men are preferred for the positions of head constable to those trained to the business; and if he will say why they are so preferred.

MR. SINCLAIR: I will make inquiries as to the first point raised by my hon. friend; with regard to the latter part of the question I may point out that the appointment of chief constable is in the hands of the county and town councils, and that these authorities are responsible for giving due weight to all considerations affecting the selection of suitable candidates.

Dromagh Estate, Cork.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners have made any further inquiries into the circumstances of the estate of Mr. Leader, D.L., Dromagh, county Cork; are they aware that there are about 2,000 acres of untenanted land, mainly in grass, available under the provisions of the Land Purchase Acts for the settlement of evicted tenants, the enlargement of uneconomic holdings, and suitable allotments for deserving labourers; and what steps the Commissioners propose to take in the matter.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. BIRRELL, Bristol, N.): The estate in question has not yet been inspected, but the Estates Commissioners anticipate that their inspector will be able to visit the estate within the next two or three months, when he will be directed to inquire into the matters to which the hon. Member refers.

MR. FLYNN: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if the Estates Commissioners have information to the effect that this landlord is willing to consider the advisability of selling these untenanted lands, but complains that the money for some he sold three years ago is not yet forthcoming?

MR. BIRRELL: I know there is a great deal of delay in getting the money, and of course estates have to be dealt with in their order of priority.

Cattle-drives—Gregory Cowle Estate, Gort.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on Thursday the 14th May last a cattle-drive took place off three farms belonging to small tenants on the Gregory Cowle Estate, two miles from Gort, County Galway: how many arrests were made: and what sentences were passed on the perpetrators of the outrage.

MR. BIRRELL: The facts are as stated in the Question. Twenty persons were arrested and bound to keep the peace.

Rosmead Estate—Mullingar.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on Thursday the 14th May last a cattle-drive took place off a farm on the Rosmead estate, Delvin district, Mullingar, County Westmeath; how many arrests were made; and what sentences were passed on the perpetrators of the outrage.

MR. BIRRELL: The police do not regard this case as one of cattle-driving. Thirteen head of cattle were found on the road adjoining the farm in question, but there were no broken gates or other indications of violence, and it was supposed that the cattle had got out through an unfinished fence.

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† Scottish Bills (Deputations Expenses).—Return of Expenses of Deputations to London from all bodies in Scotland administering public funds in connection with A. Public Bills; B. Private Bills; C. the management of their administrative work, during each of the last five years, specifying town councils, county councils, parish councils, school boards, water trusts, gas commissions, educational trusts, and dock and harbour boards, &c.

Mr. T. W. Russell on Cattle-driving.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has yet communicated with the Vice-President of the Department of Agriculture (Ireland) regarding his public statement on behalf of the Government that cattle-driving after all did no harm either to man or beast; and, if so, in view of the increasing number of cases brought to light of cows being with calf being driven during the darkness of night as far as ten miles, he will now issue an official repudiation of that statement.

MR. BIRRELL: My hon. friend informs me that the only speech which he has made on cattle-driving—that is, having any reference to it—was in October last at Manchester. The substance of what he said was that cattle-driving was illegal and intolerable, and that it must be put down. But he deprecated any panic about it, and said that, having lived through two periods of fierce agrarian strife when murder, outrage, and savage boycotting were quite common, he was thankful that this form of war had reached a stage which was comparatively harmless—in which neither man nor beast was injured. This latter statement was true at that date.

Returns of Cattle-drives.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether, in view of the increase of cattle-drives in certain parts of Ireland, he will issue with the Votes once a week an official Return giving particulars of the time, place, and number of arrests, if any, punishment awarded, if any, distance away stock was recovered, injury, if any, amount of compensation claimed, steps taken by the police to prevent further recurrence, if any, and further details for the information of honourable Members.

MR. BIRRELL: I am not aware of any precedent for furnishing with the Votes a weekly Return such as the hon. and gallant Member asks for, nor do I see that any good purpose would be served by doing so. Moreover, the weekly preparation of such a Return would impose a considerable amount of work upon the constabulary authorities, whose hands are fully occupied. I may observe that I have already, in answer to Questions, given the number of cattle-drives which have taken place in each month of the present year.

Ballygrehan Cattle-drive.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on Friday night the 15th May last a cattle-drive took place off a farm at Ballygrehan, Manorhamilton, County Leitrim; how many head were driven and how far; how many arrests have been made; and what sentences have been passed on the perpetrators of the outrage.

MR. BIRRELL: No place called Ballygrehan is known in County Leitrim, but if Ballygrehan, County Sligo, is meant, I refer to my Answer to the Question put by the hon. Member for Mid Armagh on 20th May.

Arm Cashel, Castlerea Cattle-drive.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that on Saturday, the 16th May last, a cattle-drive took place off a farm belonging to a Mr. John Flynn, of Castlerea, county Roscommon, at Arm Cashel, a mile from that town, and that the stock was recovered by the herd and police at Cloontrask, six miles distant; and will he say how many arrests have been made and what sentences passed on the perpetators of the outrage.

MR. BIRRELL: On the night of 15th May, eleven head of cattle were driven off Mr. Flynn's farm. The cattle were found four miles away. No arrests have been made. The offenders are unknown.

Leahy Estate, Aghatubrid.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will now state the actual price agreed to be paid for the Leahy estate at Aghatubrid by the Estate Commissioners, and the conditions on which the purchase negotiations have been concluded.

MR. BIRRELL: The owner of this estate has agreed to sell it to the Estates Commissioners for the sum of £4,734, upon the condition that the tenants pay one year's rent in cash to the owner in discharge of all arrears and costs due to him. The representatives of the tenants have agreed to these terms.

Tyack-O'Dell Estate, King's County.

MR. REDDY (King's County, Birr): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, whether he is aware that both tenants and vendor of the Tyack-O'Dell estate at Clonony, King's County, are anxious that the agreement come to over a year ago should be carried out; and will he instruct the Estates Commissioners to have the sale completed with as little delay as possible.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that they are unable to trace the lodgment of any purchase agreements in the case of this estate.

Dairy Inspection in Ireland.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consider the advisability of recommending to local authorities in Ireland the appointment of members of the veterinary college as inspectors under the new Dairies and Cowsheds Order issued by the Local Government Board.

MR. BIRRELL: The Local Government Board have already suggested to local authorities the desirability of appointing veterinary surgeons as inspectors for the purposes of the Dairies and Cowsheds Order.

Belfast Health Commission Report.

MR. J. DEVLIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has any power to compel the Belfast Corporation to print and publish a sufficient number of copies of the Belfast Health Commission Report to meet the public demand for the same; and, if so, whether he will exercise that power, in view of the complaints from all quarters as to the impossibility of obtaining copies of the Report; and whether, in the meantime, he will order that a copy of the Report be laid upon the Table of the House.

MR. BIRRELL: Two hundred and fifty copies of the Report in question were printed at the expense of the Belfast Corporation, and of these the Local Government Board had 150, nearly all of which have been distributed amongst public bodies and interested persons. The Corporation have declined to incur the expense of printing additional copies, and I have no power to compel them to do so. As, however, the Report is of general interest from the point of view of the public health, I will lay it on the Table at an early date.

Galway Cattle-drives.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland how many cattle-drives have taken place in the East and West Ridings of Galway, respectively, since 1st April; and what has been the cost of car-hire for bringing arrested persons before the magistrates in the same districts.

MR. BIRRELL: The number of cattle-drives which have taken place since 1st April in the East Riding of Galway is forty-nine, and in the West Riding twenty-five. On 20th May, in answer to the hon. and gallant Member for East Down, I gave particulars of the cost of conveying arrested persons before the magistrates between 25th April and 10th May. The hon. Member now asks for similar information for the period from 1st April to the present date. In order to obtain this information it would be necessary to call for returns from the local police, who are already fully occupied, and I am unwilling to impose this labour upon them unless the hon. Member has some substantial reason for requiring the information.

Roxborough Cattle-drive.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a crowd of persons lately drove the cattle belonging to Stephen Roland off his farm at Roxborough, one mile from Kilchreest, county Galway; whether the same crowd took possession of Roland's farm, which they stocked with their own cattle, and surrounded the farm with sentries armed with sticks to prevent their cattle being driven off the farm by Roland; and what steps he proposes to take, and if any arrests have been made.

MR. BIRRELL: The farm in question belongs to Colonel Courtenay, for whom Stephen Roland is manager. On 14th June, 1907, Colonel Courtenay's stock was driven off the farm. The animals were replaced, and subsequently sold by the owner. On 7th April last twenty-six trespassing cattle were driven on to the farm and were removed two days later under police protection. On 10th April trespassing stock again appeared on the farm, and on 20th May they were removed by Colonel Courtenay under police protection and impounded. The police have no knowledge of the posting of sentries armed with sticks to guard the trespassing cattle, and no complaint to that effect has been received. There was no occasion for making arrests. Full protection will be afforded to Colonel Courtenay in the exercise of his rights.

Clonmel Evicted Tenants.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether William Corrigan, who has lately been elected a member of the Clonmel District Council, has been selected by the Estates Commissioners as a fit and proper person to be restored to the holding from which he was evicted in 1896 for non-payment of eight years rent; and, if so, will he give the reasons which prompted the Estates Commissioners to recommend for reinstatement a person who had failed to pay his rent for eight years.

MR. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners are of opinion that the evicted tenant in question is a suitable person to be restored to his former holding or provided with a new one. He is eligible for reinstatement under the Act, and the fact that he was in arrear with his rent at the date of eviction does not, in the Commissioners' opinion, afford any reason why they should not deal with the case.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if an evicted tenant who is eight years in arrear with his rent can be considered eligible for reinstatement?

MR. BIRRELL: It is a matter entirely for the discretion of the Estates Commissioners.

MR. FLYNN: Is not such a case evidence of harsh rack-renting?

AN HON. MEMBER: How can there be rack-renting when there is a Land Court?

Loughrea Cattle-drive.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether in May, 1907, the sheep and cattle belonging to Thomas Conway were driven from his farm situate two miles from Loughrea; whether the walls surrounding the farm were levelled to the ground; whether Conway has been boycotted since that date; whether, during the last month, his cattle and sheep have been again driven off the farm, and the cattle, sheep, and horses of a large number of persons in the parish of Killeenadeema driven on to the farm; and whether these cattle, sheep, and horses are now on the farm, and, if so, what steps does he intend to take to protect Conway in the exercise of his vocation as a grazier, and from having his lands forcibly entered upon by strangers for illegal purposes.

MR. BIRRELL: On 29th April, 1907, Conway's sheep were driven from his grazing farm at Earl's Park and put on another farm belonging to him. The sheep were at once replaced. He was subsequently boycotted, and in June, 1907, he withdrew the stock. He has since made no efforts to assert his rights to the farm, and neighbouring farmers have put their stock to graze on it. Gaps have been made in the walls, but none have been actually levelled. Conway has not replaced his stock since June last, and there has been no second cattle-drive. If he should wish to assert his rights to the farm by impounding the trespassing cattle and replacing his own, he will receive the fullest possible protection from the police. Up to the present he has shown no inclination to do so.

The Flooding of the Bann.

MR. GORDON (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland what is the amount expended annually on the navigation works on the Lower Bann; what is the amount of annual receipts in respect of this navigation; whether those interested in the drainage of the areas flooded by the Lower Bann have submitted a scheme for the drainage of these areas, undertaking to repay the cost of such drainage; and, if so, will he state why such scheme has not been adopted and carried out.

MR. BIRRELL: The Local Taxation Returns show that for the year ending 31st March, 1907, the receipts of the Lower Bann Navigation Trustees were £1,264, and the expenditure £1,242. The expenditure for each of the two preceding years was slightly in excess of the receipts. I am not aware that any such scheme as is mentioned in the Question has been submitted.

MR. GORDON: Will any scheme brought forward be considered?

MR. BIRRELL: I am most anxious that any scheme with regard to either the Bann or the Barrow should be carefully considered.

The Missing Dublin Crown Jewels.

MR. GORDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if the only reason for Sir Arthur Vicar's dismissal was his alleged carelessness in the custody of the jewels; and, if not, what other reasons were there.

MR. BIRRELL: Sir Arthur Vicars was relieved of his office because he had failed to exercise due vigilance and proper care as custodian of the Regalia of the Order of St. Patrick, and for no other reason.

MR. GORDON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he stated to Sir Arthur Vicars and his solicitor, in the month of October last, in the presence of His Excellency, that no suspicion whatever attached to Sir Arthur Vicars as to his integrity in the custody of the Crown Jewels, and offered to write a letter to that effect; and, if he has altered his opinion since, will Sir Arthur Vicars be given an opportunity of vindicating his character by being placed upon his trial.

MR. BIRRELL: I have just stated that Sir Arthur Vicars was relieved of office solely because he had failed to exercise proper care and vigilance. No criminal charge has at any time been made against him, and consequently he has not been, and could not be, placed upon his trial.

MR. GORDON asked whether the right hon. Gentleman would grant a public judicial inquiry.

MR. BIRRELL: No, Sir. We have already directed an inquiry, and we have found three gentlemen giving their grounds why they consider Sir Arthur Vicars to have been guilty of negligence. No charge of any other kind was made against him.

MR. KILBRIDE (Kildare, S.): Is there any truth in the rumours that the jewels are at present in Bond Street?

MR. BIRRELL: I have no reason to believe so.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): What is the reason why there was no inquiry on oath? Why was not Sir Arthur Vicars' request for such an inquiry entertained?

MR. BIRRELL: The whole question has been explained over and over again.

MR. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): How is it that the chief of police, who was really responsible for the jewels, escaped without comment as to his conduct?

MR. BIRRELL: The chief of police is no more responsible for the care of these jewels than he is responsible for the care of the jewels of the hon. Member.

Irish Post Office Stores.

MR. J. MACVEAGH: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state the total value of Post Office stores in Ireland in 1906–7 and 1907–8, and the total proportion purchased in Ireland; and whether he will take steps to secure that the system of local Irish contracts will be so extended as to cover such stores as bicycles, tools, cloths for Post Office uniform, paints, boots, waterproof bags, and other articles manufactured in Ireland.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I stated on the 23rd August last, in reply to the hon. Member for the St. Patrick Division of Dublin, that the annual value of stores used by all branches of the Post Office in Ireland is roughly estimated at £73,000, not including stationery supplied by the Stationery Office or domestic stores supplied by the Office of Works. This estimate applies to either of the two years mentioned. The stores purchased in Ireland for use there cost about £12,000 in 1906–7, and £8,650 in 1907–8. In addition, stores were purchased in Ireland for use in other parts of the Kingdom to the amount of about £3,150 in 1906–7 and £3,800 in 1907–8. Cloth for uniforms is obtained under contracts made by the War Office. As regards stores purchased by the Post Office, any competent Irish manufacturers may tender, and if the price is suitable I shall be glad to place orders with Irish firms.

MR. FLYNN: Could not the Department establish a sample office in Ireland to which Irish manufacturers could send samples of goods they can supply?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I will consider that.

Belfast Post Office Extension.

MR. J. DEVLIN: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the dissatisfaction which exists in Belfast as to the inconvenience of the present posting arrangements at the General Post Office there, he will consider the advisability of acquiring the adjoining premises in Royal Avenue, lately occupied by the Workshops for the Blind, in order to have the receiving boxes placed there instead of in their present position.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I am not aware that the property in question is yet in the market. The question of the extension of the Belfast Post Office has been under consideration, and land has been purchased with that view.

Scottish Land Reform.

MR. CATHCART WASON: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the necessity for land legislation throughout Scotland, he will consider the desirability of giving facilities for the Second Reading of the Crofters Holding Bill, which is supported by a number of Scottish Liberal Members, and is an effort to translate into legislative action the principles laid down by the right hon. Gentleman himself at Inverness in 1904, when he spoke for the Liberal Party and their views with reference to land reform.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): The proposals of the Government on this subject have already been laid before and discussed by Parliament during the present session, and while I have much sympathy with what I understand to be the objects of the Bill referred to by my hon. friend, the shortness of the time which remains at our disposal and the pressure of Government business makes it impossible for me to give this measure special facilities.

Scottish Estimates.

MR. CLELAND (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, having regard to the paucity of opportunity for the discussion of the Scottish Estimates and the consequent inability adequately to discuss Scottish administration, he will consider the advisability of devising means by which the Scottish Standing Committee will have an opportunity in the future of discussing these Estimates before they are presented to the House.

MR. ASQUITH: My hon. friend's suggestion would involve far-reaching changes in the relations between Standing Committees and the House which would probably not be confined to the case of the Scottish Standing Committee. As at present advised I am not prepared to recommend such a proposal to the House.

Temperance Reform in Scotland.

MR. PIRIE: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of the desire in Scotland for a drastic measure of temperance reform, and having regard to the present legislative situation on this question in Scotland, he can state if the Government propose to introduce such a measure next year dealing with that country.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not yet able to make any statement as to the legislation of next year.

MR. PIRIE: Can the right hon. Gentleman explain why last Friday on a Private Member's Bill dealing with the temperance question for Scotland the Government could not see their way to giving hon. Members a free hand as to referring it to the Scottish Grand Committee rather than a Committee of the Whole House.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is reviving the debate of last week.

Scottish Local Veto Bill.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY (Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in view of public opinion as expressed at recent bye-elections in England and Scotland, he will proceed with the Scottish Local Veto Bill before the English Licensing Bill.

MR. ASQUITH: The Answer is in the negative.

LORD WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY: Does the right hon. Gentleman consider bye-elections no sign at all?

[No Answer was returned.]

Licensing Bill.

MAJOR DUNNE (Walsall): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he can now inform the House when the Committee stage of the Licensing Bill will be taken.

MR. ASQUITH: I regret that I am not yet in a position to fix a date.

Creation of Peerages.

MR. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the Prime Minister how many peerages have been created since the Liberal Government accepted office in December 1905; and whether this is the method the Government intend to pursue with the House of Lords in order to make the will of the people prevail, more especially in view of the recent action of that Chamber in regard to the Scottish Land Bill of the Government.

MR. ASQUITH: In answer to the first part of my hon. friend's Question, twenty-three temporal, and three spiritual Peers have been created during the period in question. The second part of the Question seems to trespass beyond the realm of fact into that of opinion.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not the usual, almost the invariable, practice when considerable changes in the composition or powers of any body are intended, either by legislation or administrative action, that additions to that body, pending the changes, are suspended.

MR. ASQUITH: That is a very large question. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will give notice of it.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Can I put another Question without notice? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the present Government have created as many Peers as were in the first Parliament of Henry VII.?

MR. H. C. LEA: Is it not a fact that, with the exception of the instance mentioned by my hon. friend opposite, there is no period in English history in which so many peerages have been created as in the period of the present Government?

*MR. SPEAKER: That would require considerable research.

MR. H. C. LEA: Is it not a fact that the democracy of this country have shown by recent bye-elections what they consider is hypocritical and inconsistent in the action taken by the Government in regard to the creation of Peers?

[No Answer was returned.]

Royal Visit to Russia.

MR. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether the King, on his approaching visit to Reval to interview the Czar of Russia, will be accompanied by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs or some other Member of the Cabinet, so as to be present at such interviews or at interviews between the King and the Russian Foreign Minister, in accordance with constitutional practice and precedent.

MR. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): Before answering the Question, may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he recognises the reasonableness of the desire, which is felt in more than one quarter of the House, that on a visit of this nature His Majesty should be accompanied by a Minister responsible to Parliament?

*Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is only repeating the Question on the Paper.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Yes, but with greater force.

Mr. ASQUITH: The King will not be accompanied by any Member of the Cabinet. With regard to constitutional practice and precedent, I must refer my hon. Member to previous Answers which have been given. I can only repeat that in the transaction of all affairs of State the practice of the Constitution is adhered to and the responsibility of Ministers of the Crown is fully maintained.

Mr. H. C. LEA: Is it not a fact that according to the librarian here the book which is the greatest authority on constitutional practice is the work called "The Law and the Custom of the Constitution," written by the hon. Member for Oxford University, and that on page 43 of that book it says that on no account should the head of the State see a foreign Sovereign or a foreign Minister without he is accompanied by a Member of the Cabinet?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That would require more research.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.) asked as to the business for next week.

Mr. ASQUITH said that it was proposed on Monday to take the Second Reading of the Finance Bill, and as the Eleven o'clock rule did not apply, he hoped that the Debate might be concluded that night. [Opposition cries of "Oh."] They had already had a discussion on the introduction of the Budget, one on the Income-tax Resolution in Committee, another on the Report stage, and one on the previous day on the Report of other Resolutions. He was most anxious not to curtail the liberty of discussion with regard to this measure, and if the House generally was of opinion that the debate could not be concluded on Monday night, it was proposed to continue it up to the dinner time on Tuesday. On the remainder of Tuesday evening they would take the Second Readings of three non-contentious Bills that it was very necessary to get—the Friendly Societies Bill, the Public Health (Markets in Rural Districts) Bill, and the Contempts of Court Bill. On Wednesday the first order would be the Motion for adjournment over the Whitsuntide holidays; and if, as he hoped, the discussion on that Motion might be concluded before 8.15, then he would respond to the appeal of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone and put down, in order to test the opinion of the House, the Motion that had stood in his name for so many weeks with regard to blocking Motions. On Thursday they would take Supply, and assuming that the Motion for the adjournment was not taken advantage of for the discussion of Foreign Office Affairs, he would put down the Foreign Office Vote to give an opportunity for the discussion of a matter of interest for the moment. If the Foreign Office Vote was discussed on the Motion for adjournment, he would put down the War Office Votes 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. He hoped that the Old-Age Pensions Bill would be circulated in two or three days.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN asked if there was any precedent for allowing less than two days for the Second Reading on the Finance Bill.

Mr. ASQUITH: Our position this year is very unusual. We have a Finance Bill and an Old-Age Pensions Bill, the latter of which offers further facilities for discussing the Budget. I hope the time I have allowed will be considered sufficient.

Mr. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck) asked when the Old-Age Pensions Bill would be circulated?

Mr. ASQUITH: In two or three days if we get the Report of the Money Resolution which is a necessary precedent.

Mr. MACKARNESS: When will the Colonial Office Vote be taken?

Mr. ASQUITH: Very soon after Whitsuntide.

Mr. COURTHOPE: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House that if the Finance Resolution were got through quickly two days would be given for the Second Reading of the Finance Bill.

Mr. ASQUITH: My right hon. friend says he did not say that.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will keep an open mind on this question. If he will make inquiries I am sure he will find there is sufficient matter for discussion and desire to speak to justify at least two days.

Mr. ASQUITH: My mind is always open, but at present I see no reason to alter the arrangement.

CORONERS' INQUESTS BILL.

Reported, with Amendments [Title amended] from Standing Committee A.

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 157.]

Minutes of the Proceedings of the Standing Committee to be printed. [No. 157.]

Bill, as amended (in the Standing Committee) to be taken into consideration upon Thursday 11th June, and to be printed. [Bill 250].

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir **William Brampton Gurdon** reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee C: Mr. Campbell and Mr. Moore; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Mr. Lonsdale and Mr. Staveley-Hill.

Report to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

WHALE FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.

"To regulate Whale Fisheries in Ireland," presented by Mr. T. W. Russell; to be read a second time upon Monday, 15th June, and to be printed. [Bill 252.]

NAVIGATION WORKS (IRELAND) BILL.

"To facilitate the execution of Navigation Works in Ireland, and for other porposes connected therewith," presented by Mr. T. W. Russell; to be read a second time upon Monday, 15th June, and to be printed. [Bill 253.]

SUPPLY [8th Allotted Day].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

[Mr. Emmott (Oldham) in the Chair.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

Class V.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £792,376, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for sundry Colonial Services, including certain Grants-in-Aid."

Mr. LYTTELTON (St. George's, Hanover Square): As the House understands there will be another opportunity of discussing general questions connected with South Africa, I do not now propose to say anything in regard to South African questions, but I will confine my observations chiefly to East Africa, and to certain matters of Colonial administration connected with that country. The late Under-Secretary for the Colonies, after his recent journey, at any rate will not dispute the general interest in East Africa, and the general interest and opportunity that this country has in the future of East Africa has been recognised by very large sums of money being spent in the interior development not merely of East Africa, properly so-called, but what we may call the eastern side of the African Continent. It is hardly necessary to remind the House that large sums, amounting to something like £6,000,000 had been spent on the Uganda Railway, an expense which was always greatly deprecated by the late Sir William Harcourt, who prophesied the most gloomy financial results in respect to that railway, prophecies which, I am glad to say, have been very largely falsified in the result. Extensions of that railway, I believe, are actually in contemplation now, and with the general approval of those who are administering that country. If the Uganda Railway has been a success and done very much to open up the country, so we may recognise that further northwards a railway has been opened from Port Suakin to Khartoum which has opened up the Soudan, and that in Nyassaland the Shiré Railway is shortly to be opened.

An HON. MEMBER: It is open.

Mr. LYTTELTON: I will not labour this point. At Beira and Lorenco Marques great extensions of trade have also taken place. Many of these enterprises have been fostered especially by British enterprise and British capital, nor can it be denied for a moment that the British taxpayer has had a considerable burden and risk, and a very proper risk in my opinion, laid upon him for the development of these countries. What I wish to bring to the attention of the Colonial Office and of the hon. and gallant Gentleman who no doubt will speak later on, is that there seems to have been an arrest of activity at what the French would call the "beau moment"; that is to say, that while a very large expenditure has been made upon these internal communications, all the ports from Durban to Zanzibar had been allowed to fall into the hands of a subsidised German Shipping Company, who practically now hold the monopoly of all those ports. I do not wish the Committee to suppose that I complain of the Germans' action in this matter. They get £70,000 a year, and they are only following, as they are bound to do in consideration of the receipt of that subsidy, exclusively German interests, and of course, from their point of view, they are perfectly right to do that. They are pushing the merits of their country into East Africa, and they are pushing also the export of the raw materials of these countries for use in their own industries, and they are doing that with the energy and closeness always associated with German enterprise. Let me remind the House that I have been told by those who have been actually on the spot, as an illustration of the way in which British ports are treated by this German Company, that in their southward voyage down the east coast of Africa they actually stay for only two hours at Zanzibar and that they then go on to Dar-es-Salaam, a German port, where they stay for several days, collecting German letters, and then they return to Zanzibar, in order, naturally enough, that the British interests in that place may be definitely deferred to the German interests at Dar-es-Salaam. I submit that this is a state of things which requires investigation and action. I think that in 1902 a Select Committee of this House, presided over with great ability by my hon. friend behind me, the Member for Aston, reported in favour of subsidising some British line in East Africa, having regard to the then condition of affairs, and I do not think it will be denied by any of those who have gone into the matter that the occasion is much more imminent now than it was then, because in those days, at any rate, the Austrian-Lloyd ships were in existence and had some business in that part, and so were also the Messageries Maritimes, the French company. Both these companies, I understand, are no longer running steamships to East Africa, and we therefore have this peculiar situation, that immense sums have been spent, and rightly spent, on the development of the interior of East Africa, and yet the ports are left exclusively in the hands of the Germans. To even the most devoted disciples of Cobden there must be some apparent absurdity in subsidising a country and permitting trade rivals to monopolise your ports. After going to vast expense in developing the Colonial estate it is a strange proceeding to draw timorously back when you are just about to gather important fruits as the result of that enterprise. I suppose they imagine this refusal to subsidise steamers is founded on a definite principle, and that the relations of this country with the Crown Colonies are those of the distinct *laissez aller* or the Manchester principle, or, as it is sometimes humorously called, the principle of free trade. I submit that that so-called principle does not exist with respect to the relations between this country and her Crown Colonies. No less distinguished a man than Lord Cromer fell into what I believe is the general fallacy in respect to the matter. Let me remind the House of one or two fundamental matters with regard to Crown Colony finance. It is supposed to be one of absolute free trade. I say it exhibits very clearly and concedes the principle of Colonial preference By the instrumentality of the Crown Agents the Crown Colonies obtain the advantage of the credit of this country. Their loans are brought out here by the Crown Agents, and it is a fact, I believe, not generally known but worth knowing, that no Crown Colony has ever defaulted in one sixpence of interest on the loans which have been raised. Nobody will doubt that that is largely due to the great stabilty and credit which results to them from the flotation of these loans by the Crown Agents and by the credit of the country which inferentially is at the back of the Colonies. But that great assistance is not given for nothing. The Crown Colonies, broadly speaking, have been equipped in railways, in electric apparatus, in public buildings, and in what we may call the apparatus and equipment of civilised government, in the first place by money lent by this country, and next by stores bought in this country by contract with the Crown Agents; so that you have on one hand the credit of the country assisting the Crown Colony in its development, and on the other the very important advantage for this country of supplying not universally, but in almost every case, that equipment and those stores which are necessary to building up a civilised community in those lands. There is, therefore, the most definite reciprocity. There is the preference granted to the Colony by the lending to her of money and by the raising of loans in this country by the Crown Agents, and there is reciprocity and preference to this country granted by the purchase of the various and great necessities of her civilised existence by the Colony, which has the result, of course, of affording a very great amount of custom to our manufacturers and a very great amount of employment to our artisans. I have pointed out that in East Africa at the present moment there appears to be an arrested development. It is against common sense that we should do so much and yet stop at just the last moment—that we should in the first place go to the immense risk and expense of the acquisition of these countries, that we should call upon and encourage our citizens to develop them, to build railways and bridges and make roads, and then leave at the last moment when, with a very small expenditure in comparison with that which has gone before—£50,000 or £60,000 a year in subsidising steamships—we might, at any rate, occupy, not to the exclusion of the Germans but with them, both with honour and utility, those ports and those Colonies in whose development we have already spent so much. I am not at all saying that hon. Gentlemen opposite are solely responsible for this curious lapse on the part of the Colonial Office. I think all Governments, owing to the old traditions, have been, to a certain extent, responsible. But I attribute these defects very much to the want of actual contact of those who rule these Colonies as governors with the Colonial Office. The system of Government in Crown Colonies is, to some extent, responsible for this failure of touch, and I wish to ask the hon. Gentleman a question in regard to the organisation of the Colonial Office: What has become of a certain scheme which I had directed to be set in order just before I left the Colonial Office, and what reason there has been for its determination? I am referring to a scheme with which I desired to make some experiment in order to give greater contact and greater interchange between our Colonial service and the Colonial Office. In the Foreign Office, officials are often changed from the Ambassadorial service abroad to the Foreign Office at home, to the great profit, I believe, of both services. I need hardly refer to the fact that our present Ambassador at Paris was the Chief Permanent Secretary at the Foreign Office, and Sir Charles Hardinge, now the Chief Permanent Official of the Foreign Office, was Ambassador at St. Petersburg. The India Office utilise the great experience, wisdom, and skill of their Indian administrators, by using them in the India Council. Lord Curzon pointed out, and I was pleased that he did so, because it corroborated my own action at the Colonial Office, how the country wasted the material of administration which it had at hand. He pointed out how many of those who had served the country abroad as Colonial Governors, or in India, were without occupation, coming back on pension, still with many years work in them, still with experience which is very much needed, and is almost unique, and yet is very much wasted. I have always felt there was great force in it. Before I left the Colonial Office, as the result of very prolonged consideration, I desired to make an experiment in this matter. It is peculiarly applicable to African administration. Our Governors, for instance, in West Africa, by reason of the climate, get six months holiday for every eighteen months that they serve. The whole continuity of their Governorship is broken, and they cease to be Governors when they come back to England for these six months, and they say that the gear of the Crown Colonies which they administer is thrown out for the time when the Deputy-Governor is appointed. There is a great desire, and it must be felt to be reasonable that, if possible, our Colonial Office administration should be continuous, and the enormous bulk of correspondence between the Crown Colonies and the Colonial Office mitigated, as I think has taken place in some other offices, by more personal contact between the Colonial Office and those who administer the Crown Colonies. There is also the consideration, and it is a very vital one, of the health of our administrators in hot climates, and there is also the not less important consideration that under the old system, breaches of domestic life necessarily took place, because the wives and children of administrators are not able to be taken out in those climates. This throws a considerable burden upon Governors, and makes these positions not as popular as we should wish them to be. It would be an immense advantage if you could utilise the opportunities when Governors come home, to place them in an actual official position at the Colonial Office. Take the instance of a very distinguished man, Sir Frederick Lugard, who had administered with great distinction Northern Nigeria, for eight years, who was profoundly attached to that country, and of whose work there we are naturally proud. Why was his work there so good? Amongst other reasons, because it was continuous for eight years. Why was Lord Cromer's work in Egypt so abundantly fruitful? Because it was continuous for a long period of years. Putting aside controversial matters, and looking at Lord Milner's civil work in the Transvaal during his eight years of office, who can doubt that the continuity of his rule had a most important effect upon the efficiency of his administration? I do not say that this tendency is universal, but I believe that when men have held public offices not only abroad but in this country for three or four years, they are just beginning to find out what the office really means, and what its possibilities are. I believe myself that there are administrators in East and West Africa in regard to whom it would be good for them and the service and for the Colonial Office and the country if they could serve in the Colonial Office for three or four months periodically in the rainy season without vacating their Governorships. I believe that this system would settle many difficult and controversial questions which have, under the present system, to be submitted at immense length in correspondence to the Colonial Office. These administrators would then get the benefit of the experience and ability of the officials at the Colonial Office, and those who had administered for many years our Crown Colonies could discuss with the Secretary of State and the permanent officials those questions in regard to which there is any difference of opinion, and they could reason them out together. This would be spending their time far more satisfactorily than engaging in the almost interminable correspondence which now takes place. I do not say that there are no difficulties in the way. I desired to make an experiment in the case of Sir Frederick Lugard, allowing him to come home for five months while retaining his Governorship. He would then have been administering seven months in the Colony, and would have been at home five months. I think that that would have retained his services in Nigeria for a considerable time longer, and it would have formed a valuable precedent and example in the future for extension if it proved successful. Such a system would save a great deal of time and friction when there are differences of opinion between those at home and the Governors abroad. That personal contact with those who have been on the spot would give life and vigour to the Office, and it might form the germ of a council of administrators in tropical matters—corresponding in some respects to the Indian Council—which in that development of East and West Africa we all expect to see might be of the greatest possible service. Those matters were at the back of my mind when I suggested what was considered to be a cautious and tentative experiment. I regret that for some reason or other it was not pursued, and I should like to hear what the reason was. Very likely it was owing to the great burden of work thrown upon the Colonial Office in connection with South Africa when this Government first took office. I should be glad to hear that the proposal has not been definitely pigeon-holed, but that the Colonial Office are keeping in mind the great advantages which might accrue to the country were our administrators in these tropical climates given more frequent opportunity of being brought in consultation with our permanent officials at home. This would save a good deal of the labour and difficulty which arises in conducting important affairs of administration, finance, and the like, by correspondence. I trust that we may hear something satisfactory on this point from the Under-Secretary. We ought to be looking towards the time when the Crown Colonies should be separated definitely in administration at the Colonial Office from the self-governing Colonies, and there should be some open-mindedness with regard to the necessity of bringing our Colonial Governors into closer contact with the Colonial Office and obtaining for the country for a longer period than at present the benefit of their advice and prolonged experience.

*Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said he wished to bring to the notice of the Under-Secretary for the Colonies certain recent events which had occurred in British East Africa. Before entering into any details he would like to congratulate the Colonial Office upon the fact that the Estimates for British East Africa had fallen from £192,000 to £138,000, a net decrease this year of £54,000. He confessed that that of itself was satisfactory, but he would be glad if the hon. Member would state how this great reduction had been brought about. Had it been brought about by the wholesale sale of Crown lands to the settlers without reserving a legitimate amount for the future? If so, he thought they might regard that diminution with some suspicion. He did not think the Committee quite realised what a great asset the Empire had in the Colony of British East Africa, which presented conditions which were unique in Crown Colonies. Take the case of the white settlers. There were some thousands of whites and Englishmen who had gone out to gain a livelihood and make a fortune if possible. There were also a certain number of Boer farmers from the south who had been pressed out of their own country by an increasing number of white settlers. There were also a certain number of native Indians there, and a large population of natives. Again, the natives were just as diverse in their characteristics. There were the coast towns and the districts where cotton could be cultivated in a greater degree year by year. Along the Uganda Railway they would find fine healthy plateaux where the white race could flourish in future, and where he had seen white children as healthy as any in England. On the north of the Colony they had unknown regions towards Abysinnia. Taking all these things into consideration the possibilities of this Colony were something which he thought in the not very distant future would be a very great advantage to our Colonial Empire, not only in regard to trade but also as an outlet for its surplus population. He saw no economic reason why this Colony should not prosper if the present labour difficulties there were smoothed over as they might very easily be. What were the difficulties which had arisen lately in British East Africa? The first was the economic difficulty. A great many men had gone out there thinking they would be able in a very short time to make fortunes out of agriculture, but they had found the elements against them, and many of them had been discouraged with the difficulties they had met with because they had tried to work on too small a capital. The inevitable result in all such cases was that those men became dissatisfied with the Government. Consequently these labour troubles which had arisen had found in this Colony a very fertile ground in which the seeds of dissatisfaction could be sown. The chief difficulty had been the inertia of the Governor and the permanent officials in failing to help the Colony to get a proper supply of native labour. The trouble had been going on for some time, but it did not reach an acute stage until last March, when deputations from the settlers were received, and the Governor convened a meeting at Nairobi. He did not like to criticise the action of the Governor, who was the representative of His Majesty, but he submitted that if the Governor convened a meeting and took the chair at it, he by that action rather laid himself open to hearing remarks and listening to speeches to which it was inadvisable His Majesty's representative should have to listen. But that was only a minor point. The Governor at the meeting made a speech which practically amounted to a refusal to modify in any serious way the present labour ordinance. In the speeches made at the meeting, various members pointed out that individual officials had discouraged the natives from coming in to labour. The Governor stated that, after all, he could not be responsible for the individual acts of his subordinates. Here, again, he was loth to criticise the Governor, but he thought they could not admit in this House that the Governor was not responsible for the acts of his subordinates. If they had done wrong he must bring them to book, and if their action was right he must support them. After the Governor withdrew, the Colonists held an indignation meeting, attended by two members of the Governor's Council, and a resolution was passed deprecating the action of the Governor. Members of the meeting proceeded to the Governor's house, and requested an interview, which he at first refused but eventually granted. There was no practical result from the interview, and they withdrew a certain distance and held another indignation meeting. He himself cordially supported the action of the Colonial Office in supporting the Governor in suspending these two members of the council from their office, for it seemed to him that, whatever grievances there might be, they were no excuse for members of the Governor's Council attending an indignation meeting and practically appealing to him to give an answer whether he wished to do so or not. The gist of the matter was that the settlers had legitimate grievances, but that they were not very happy in the way they expressed them. What remedial measures did he ask the Government to adopt? He would suggest that the Government should see that the Governor, whoever he might be in future, possessed the great virtue of tact, that he had energy, and that he had great knowledge of the native character, because that was of very great importance in managing African natives. He did not think it was possible for this country to enter into the minute details of any labour regulations that might be laid down in East Africa. General principles could be laid down, and the working out of the details must be left to the Governor of the Colony and his Council. At present he thought the labour regulations were rather too one-sided; they said that an employer of native labour must provide cooking pots, food, blankets, and all sorts of things. That was quite right, but if the regulations were framed in a more liberal spirit, and carried out in a less dictatorial way, they would be more acceptable to the good employers of labour, and good employers were in the great majority there as in most other countries. At the same time the regulations should strictly lay down that any employer of labour who was found cheating or improperly treating his men would be most severely punished. Such regulations would carry the assent of the great majority of the people there. The Governor ought to try to take steps whereby an employer of labour who lost some of his men should be able to let the labourers know that they could not leave their work without any punishment at all. Some hon. Members might not agree with him in that. What he meant was that if a labourer was taken on for a month, and ran away within a week or ten days, it was surely only right that the Government should support the employer in bringing the labourer before the magistrates. These men were brought to a district at great expense from long distances, and employers should have security, if they were treating the men well, that the men would give a certain amount of stability of employment in the carrying out of agricultural operations. Another reform which he wished to see carried out was the substitution of a poll tax for the hut tax. At present they taxed only the father of a family, and this diminished the number of huts the people could live in, because they knew that the more huts they built the more they would be taxed. The change he suggested would have the advantage of causing lazy young natives who now only took to drink to do a useful day's work. There was a point in regard to passes from native reserves which ought to be dealt with. At present when a native left the reserves he was obliged to have a pass. He was practically unable to move without a pass. It was well-known that a great deal of blackmail was levied on the natives in connection with this matter. He would read an extract from a letter lately received from a prominent settler which illustrated this matter—

> "It is always said to be a desirable thing for natives to enter into the body politic of the country and give up living in reserves, but let's see what happens to them. The other day Nagollagwony, a lyoni (Masai), who used to work here thought he would give up living with his own people and go and live in one of the towns by working. He sold his cattle, much to the annoyance of his relations, and got a job as boy. He was paid off at Hisumu, promptly arrested by the police for being alive or something. He happened to know me and asked the police to wire to me, and all was well, but only because I knew him.
>
> "Is it likely natives are going to leave the reserves if that is what happens to them?
>
> "Another: three lyonis came in to visit my men in Nairobi the other day and asked me for a pass to go and feed and sleep in the town. I said that the other men had got one, and they could go under that. These three and two of my men went down to sleep in the town and as they could not all go together these three small boys went and slept at a different hut. All five were arrested. I was dining at the hotel and went to the police station. They released my men but refused to release the other three, although I told them I was responsible for them. I went into Court next morning and after a so-called trial in which no one, either prisoners, magistrate or interpreter, had the slightest idea what was going on, they were fined 2 rupees each for being outside the Masai reserve without a pass. I paid the fine, but if I hadn't they would have gone into the chain-gang. I turned round to the interpreter, a Masai with a blanket, and asked him for his pass. Of course as he was a Government askari he was outside the law and hadn't got one. I therefore called on the magistrate to have him arrested. He refused to do so. Of course they were quite wrong in law but they simply refused to carry it out."

It was within his personal knowledge that that was a practical instance of what happened in East Africa. If the hon. Gentleman could not see his way to abolish the pass system, he would urge him to see whether it could not be made lighter and less stringent for the sake of both natives and employers of labour. The petty restrictions imposed on both white men and natives were rather paternal in their nature. The Government was started there when there were only a few wild tribes in the country. Since then the natives had got more educated and there had been a large influx of white population. Therefore, regulations which were suited for former times were not suitable for the present. He would conclude by reading another passage from the same letter, because it summed up the situation very well—

> "In fact the official caste in this country which is all powerful here is putting the native under the same disabilities in the petty things of every-day life that he is under in South Africa and which were, according to the Natal Commission, the cause of the unrest in Natal. The Commission says it is not the taxes which cause the unrest but the fact that they are not thoroughly understood and their manner of collection. Take ourselves: we don't the least mind paying taxes but we object strongly to all the petty little childish regulations and rules we live under in this country. And the natives are just the same, at least they tell us so. They say we recognise that you people who have conquered our country have behaved well to us in not taking all our cattle and belongings and in not making us all slaves, because you are able to do so, and we are willing that reasonable limits should be put on the land we hold, and if you pay taxes—well, we must pay them too, and the young men can go out to look for work to pay them, as there is nothing for them to do now that raiding is done away with, and a great many of them take to drinking. That is all right; but in the name of goodness why do your policemen and askaris never leave us alone, and why do we have to walk several miles to get a pass to go half a mile, and why can't we go about as we like without being bothered? I will give you one or two instances

illustrating this. I was talking the other day in the bar of the club to a police officer at the time this labour bother was on, and he said of course Kikuyu won't come in to work; they are afraid of you settlers on the roads. I said I believed on the contrary that one great reason was their fear of the police. I said let us have first-hand evidence, ask the Kikuyu serving behind the bar. The police officer asked him in Swahili why Kikuyu did not like coming in to work in Nairobi now, and the answer was: 'Because the police always arrest everyone for nothing.' I think that is worth a thousand assertions by people who never speak to a native."

He was not at this point blaming officials there. On the whole they were doing excellent work under difficult circumstances. It was not easy to give an unbiased statement of what went on, but the administration of the law should be made as easy as possible to enable the natives to move about. He believed that a proposal had been made that the native reserves should be very greatly diminished. It was said that they should not keep natives in the reserves; that if they were allowed to remain in reserves they would not come out and work. He strongly protested against that argument. The natives of British East Africa were there long before we went there, and if the land belonged to anybody it was to the natives of that country. We had taken the country for good or evil, and we had done a good deal for the natives in the way of giving them security, law and order, and the opportunity to earn wages if they wished. We had given them many of the advantages of civilisation and also some of its disadvantages. But, as we had taken nine-tenths of their land from them, it was only fair that they in the House of Commons who had any say in the matter should preserve to these the land which yet remained to them. They knew what had happened when Crown Colony government ceased and self-government was given in certain Colonies. They knew that the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand guaranteed the lands forever to the Maoris and their children, yet the Maoris did not now own a quarter of the land which they used to do. The Waitangi Treaty had been absolutely torn up. He asked the hon. Gentleman to look very closely into any proposals that were made for a change in the land laws in British East Africa.

Mr. Ashley.

*MR. CATHCART WASON (Orkney and Shetland) said that the hon. Member for Blackpool had referred to New Zealand, a country he knew well. The hon. Gentleman would be gratified to know that the Maoris in New Zealand were exceedingly well-off at the present time; that they were increasing in numbers and that in fact they were the landed aristocracy of the Dominion.

*MR. ASHLEY said that legislation had been passed which deprived them of a great deal of their land.

*MR. CATHCART WASON said that that was so at one time, but it was only possible now for the Crown to acquire land from the Maoris. Perhaps what had done more than anything else to satisfy native feeling in New Zealand had been the calling of the representatives of the Maoris themselves into the Colonial Parliament so that they might tell the Government what they wanted and how they felt, in a way which it would have been otherwise impossible for them to do. They all sympathised very much with the tone of the speech of the hon. Member for Blackpool. There was very little to find fault with in it, except a hint at first of some wrongdoing on the part of the Governor. He believed that the Governor of British East Africa possessed all the requisites of an excellent administrator. He had a complete knowledge of the natives, had great energy, and had long experience in Uganda before going to East Africa. The gentleman had travelled all over the country, and with few exceptions his conduct had, he believed, commanded the general approval of the settlers in East Africa. He thought that some of the settlers in East Africa did not quite realise how much they owed to the Governor. There were, of course, settlers and settlers. There were poor men who wanted to make a living peacefully, and establish a home for themselves where they could bring up their children. There were other settlers who merely went to that country to exploit it; men, representing large syndicates in this country and elsewhere, whose sole desire was to make what money they could out of the country and out of the natives. No doubt the Governor was made aware of very great abuses which had taken place, connected with the employment of the natives. Hon. Members, however, had not yet had all the Papers with regard to that subject. When the President of the Board of Trade was in that country he saw quite sufficient to warrant him in seriously considering the desirability of introducing certain regulations for the protection of the natives. Let the Committee realise what those regulations are. They did not amount to much. The hon. Member forgot the great fact that laws were made not for good men, but for bad men. He knew that a good man might object to laws which seemed to press rather hardly upon an individual here and there, but it should be remembered that laws were made for the general good. It was for that purpose that the labour regulations had been put in force by the Governor, and he was glad to hear that there was no intention of departing from them. They were as reasonable as they possibly could be made. The first was that the employer must see that his labourers were properly housed. The second had to do with the provision of blankets to the labourers. It was almost a paramount necessity that natives should be provided with blankets if they had to go from extreme heat to extreme cold within twenty-four hours. Other regulations applied to food rations or an allowance in lieu thereof, to an adequate supply of good water, and to security for the payment of wages. He did not think that there was one of the regulations to which the hon. Member would take objection if put in force in this country. At the celebrated meeting at Nairobi the spokesmen of the discontented settlers put their case and stated exactly what they wanted. He said—

> "I hold there is to-day a scarcity in the labour market, a ridiculous position when we consider the idle millions in this country all capable of being taught their responsibilities to the common State."

What were we that we should attempt to dictate to the natives of East Africa that they must labour, how they were to labour, for whom they should labour, and at what rate they should labour? East Africa fell into our hands, so to speak, after it had been almost depopulated by many wars. For the suppression of slavery there we incurred an expenditure of six or seven millions, and he did not think that even if that great financier, the late Sir William Harcourt, were here now, he would grudge one penny expended in such noble work. We did not expect to make money out of that expenditure.

MR. ASHLEY asked if we had not some responsibility for regulating the work of those natives and encouraging those who were not now inclined to work to engage in work?

*MR. CATHCART WASON said he hoped that British East Africa was, and would always remain, a free country. We had no right to regulate labour there any more that the hon. Member had the right to regulate labour on his own estate.

MR. ASHLEY said that trade unions tried it.

*MR. CATHCART WASON said that if there had been trade unions among the natives the settlers would not have got as much labour as they did now. These natives could make a living on their own land. The taxation of the natives in Uganda amounted to only 2s. or 3s. a year, and that was not a heavy burden for all the advantages they enjoyed. But to say that the Colonial Governor was to regulate their labour and their rates of pay, and that they should be punished—possibly whipped—if they left their employ, was what he believed this Government and this House would never tolerate for a moment in any Colonial Possession. He hoped there would be many British settlers in British East Africa but not men who went there merely to make money.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): For what other purpose than to make money do settlers go to these countries?

*MR. CATHCART WASON said that there were many people who went to East Africa, as they did in the early days to Australia and New Zealand, simply to make a home.

*Mr. REES: Not to make money?

*Mr. CATHCART WASON said that homes were not made by money alone; and there were many homes in these Colonies at the present time made for the sake of homes, not money. As to the question of native lands in East Africa, he was sure they all felt glad to hear of the pledges given by the late Colonial Secretary and his predecessor in office, that the natives were to have ample lands for themselves and their children in the future. We had learned bitter lessons in other Colonies in regard to robbing the natives of their lands, and he hoped that we were not going to take away land from the people of East Africa so long as they could possibly obtain an existence from it. He congratulated his hon. friend on having the same good opinion of the country as he had from having visited it. He agreed with one remark of the right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, as to the necessity for more communications in East Africa if progress was to be made in that country. The communications hitherto hade been exceedingly unsatisfactory. He did not say they were to abandon free trade principles, but everybody knew very well that in all the mail contracts we had regard to the class of vessels that were to be employed for the conveyance of mails. He submitted that if the Government decided to send mails to America or Australia without giving a subsidy it would result in a very serious disturbance of business, and it was obvious that the Government must do something for East Africa in the way of subsidising a mail service. He did not agree that the development of East Africa was being arrested, and even if it were there was no principle which should be so close to the heart of the Administration as the principle of hastening slowly. If things were hurried they would only result in landing the country and the Administration in a hopeless position. He believed the Administrator of East Africa was a most capable manager of affairs, and he trusted the Government would condemn the action of those well-placed individuals who had set such a bad example to their fellows and to the natives. The natives possessed a strong sense of government and paid more duty and allegiance to their chief than any other people. He congratulated his hon. friend, and he agreed with much of what he said, on the sympathetic way in which he spoke.

Sir GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) said that with regard to the question which had been raised by his right hon. friend the Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, which might be called co-operation in relation to the Colonial services, he would like to see the Government take advantage of the experience and service of officials of the Colonial Office over the seas by using them in the Colonial Office at home, and thereby providing a kind of co-ordination of the over-sea service in relation to the Colonial Office in this country. He regarded this as a very important matter, and the time had come when such a system was necessary in the case of the self-governing Colonies for the settlement of questions between those Colonies and ourselves. In the case of the Crown Colonies they were not in such close touch, and this country could not regard lightly the wonderful and important services rendered by Colonial officials in subordinate Crown Colonies. Our Colonial stake in the Colonies of West and East Africa in point of population was enormous and we had always been rather anxious as to the value of our great dependencies in Africa to the Empire. Most of those who had read the yearly Reports from West and East Africa must be satisfied that we had in Northern Nigeria particularly a country where Europeans could live, on the plateau, without that climatic change which was necessary for them when living in other parts, such as Southern Nigeria. The Committee could not estimate too highly the importance of these West and East African Colonies. When Canada ceased to take in the surplus population of these Islands—the arrest had already come in the United States with the agricultural development—we should need new places for our overflow, and Rhodesia, British East Africa, and Northern Nigeria, would, he believed, be settled by vast numbers of people. The lure of those lands would be as great then as was the lure of Canada now. The pessimism with regard to our Colonies was not, in his opinion, well-founded. His right hon. friend had spoken of the question of subsidising steamship companies. His right hon. friend was rather pessimistic in his view of British trade, which no doubt was not so good as it ought to be in view of the enormous opportunities we had had. In Uganda no doubt Germany had made enormous strides as against this country. Both Germany and the United States had done well for themselves in getting a share of the trade of Uganda and East Africa, and we were approaching the point at which we should lose; but in the main it was satisfactory to find that the grants-in-aid to these Colonies were steadily decreasing whilst the revenue was increasing by leaps and bounds. The record of imports and exports was entirely satisfactory in view of and in relation to the reduction of the grants-in-aid. The serious thing was that the British India Steam Navigation Company only visited these ports once a month. The Messageries Maritimes visited them once a month, but the Germans sent a ship every three weeks, and there was communication with Bombay every fortnight. That was a very serious thing. He remembered visiting Samoa in 1888 at which time we had scarcely any commercial connection with that island. We left it to Australia to control. We lost our connection with it because of the German subsidy to the North German Lloyd Steamship Company which sent little steamers from Sydney to carry all the trade that could be got. That policy eventually secured for Germany the complete control of Samoa, and the country that secured the commercial control of another country was eventually bound to secure the political control. Our position in the South Seas had been injured because we had not taken advantage as we ought to have done of the position we once held. We once had absolute commercial control of the Sandwich Islands. The United States eventually obtained it by means of subsidies, and had since made regulations which prevented a British ship carrying a single ounce of goods from those islands to the United States. Their policy had been to give an advantage to their own ships to devop trade. We did not confine our subsidies for mails to steamship companies. We extended them to railways which carried mails. The Government, who had already infringed the principle of free trade, might very well do in British East Africa what they had already done in regard to cotton-growing in another place. It was an extremely elementary form of protection to subsidise cotton-growing, which cheapened cotton from Manchester. But he was not really trying to make a tariff reform discussion out of this subject. He was only pointing out what we had to face. The best of rules were infringed in the practical life of a nation. It must be so. We had deliberately infringed in the Merchant Shipping Acts and in the Patents Acts—["No"]—the old-fashioned theory of free trade. He did not want to be controversial, however; he was only making his plea for the consideration by the Government of increased subsidies and encouragements of British steamships to assist in developing the fast-growing trade of British East Africa, and what would be the still fast-growing trade of Northern Nigeria. Sir Percy Girouard believed, and anyone reading the Reports would agree with him, that in Nigeria we had a great commercial asset. The whole question of subsidies must be dealt with by this Government or a succeeding Government, in due course. He hoped his hon. friend would make more clear the difficulties, and the solving of those difficulties, if they had been solved, which had existed between the Government and members of the Council who had been removed. It was very difficult across the floor of the House to get at these matters, because the Government sometimes did not want to give an answer, or sometimes it was not expedient to give it. Sometimes the questions were not altogether wise, and sometimes those who put them were conscious that they were making difficulties for the Minister. But in a debate like the present they had the right to ask, and the public had a right to know, exactly what the situation was. He should like to know whether there was any indication that these gentlemen who had been removed were likely to be restored to their position. If they had been in the wrong, or if they had made a mistake—he did not know that they had; he believed that they had, but he had not all the facts before him—was there any possibility of their being restored to the Council? When in a strife between the Government and individuals the individuals had been worsted, it was a good thing on the part of the Government not to bear anything like a permanent reproach, and he should like to hear from his hon. friend that a settlement of the question had been arrived at, and, perhaps, at the same time he would make clear the exact condition as regarded the labour regulations. It would satisfy a good many of those who were greatly interested in the question. He did not wish to harry the Government in regard to a difficult problem. Might he raise another question which had been discussed in that House, sometimes with great acrimony, though he did not at all wish to discuss it with acrimony: he referred to the question of the New Hebrides and native labour. He believed the hon. Gentleman had been one of the most strenuous in urging the Government to see that there were proper regulations concerning the recruiting of natives. They were really in the dark at the present time as to the exact position of affairs. He had asked Questions from time to time concerning the New Hebrides and had not had very satisfactory answers. For instance, he had asked whether France had proclaimed the Convention.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby) was understood to say that they had made a proclamation.

SIR GILBERT PARKER said he had asked the other day whether Deputy Commissioners had been appointed who would have control of the regulations dealing with native labour inside the islands jointly, and he had received no reply to that. These were very important questions. If the Deputy-Commissioners had not been appointed, if they had not been installed in their office, they had no direct control over the conditions of importation and the general regulations agreed upon by France and this country. Australia was making complaint. At the present time, arms, ammunition, and liquor were being imported into the islands. That was a very serious thing. He noticed in reading the Reports the other day that in 1905 £3,000 worth of ammunition was imported from France, and from this country or Australia £1,000 worth. There was no regulation so important as that relating to arms, ammunition, and liquor. The less arms and ammunition were put into the hands of the natives the better. Australia was right in protesting against this importation, and asked that a check should be put upon it. The House had never thoroughly understood the facts with regard to recruitment in the outside islands. It was quite true that the late Under-Secretary had made several statements which, if he interpreted them aright, meant that so far as those islands were concerned the two countries were jointly responsible for the recruiting that went on inside the islands, but when it came to a question of recruiting outside the islands, then each country became individually responsible. That was an extraordinary state of things. He knew the neighbouring islands and what was going on and what had gone on there, and as he had pointed out in the debates which first occurred on this subject, France ought to agree as to the regulations concerning natives who were recruited in the islands for work in New Caledonia. He held that view very strongly indeed. The Foreign Minister and the Under-Secretary for the Colonies held the view that legally and constitutionally France alone could be responsible for labour regulations inside her own territory. That was perfectly true, once the labour got there. But there was no reason whatever why we should not be responsible for the well-being of the natives. The Governments of France and England were the only Governments in the New Hebrides. He did not distrust France, but that was not the point; it was our duty as joint protector of the natives of these islands to know what the regulations were that were going to be enforced in regard to those who left the islands which were under our protection. He thought there could be no question of that; and if the Government were consenting that France should make for the natives recruited in the New Hebrides her own regulations in which we had no voice, to which we had not given our consent, and concerning which there was no agreement, then the Government was wanting in its duty, and was not playing fair to the natives for whom it was directly responsible. That was the point which he made most vehemently, and he maintained that it was the only position which the House could possiby take up. We were in those islands a sort of police, and we should either see that order was maintained as far as possible, provide that opportunities for settlement should be made easy, and see that the natives were well cared for and properly treated, or withdraw. France would have a perfect right to criticise any regulations that we made with regard to Fiji, and to say that she did not approve of the regulations we were making for the settlement of natives there. He hoped that the hon. Gentleman would give the Committee a satisfactory statement, for he believed that the principle involved was of vital importance, namely, that we should be responsible for everything that happened to these natives. He believed the Committee understood how important these islands were to the future of the Empire, as well as to the future of Australia. New Caledonia and the New Hebrides lay in the line of the trade routes to our own territories. They had Germany on the north and there was uncertainty as to what would eventually become of Java; they had the Philippines on the North-West owned by the United States; and quite apart from any question of who owned the territory it was a most important thing as to who should, as it were, control the lands that lay along our trade routes. We had deliberately given up the New Hebrides as we had deliberately given up Samoa to the Germans. It was offered to us and we refused to take it. We had always hesitated to add to our dominions. He had never advocated the acquisition of territory in order to enlarge our Empire, but he doubted if any man who knew the commerce of this country would not agree with him that it was important that in the South Pacific our influence should not be allowed to decline on a single one of these islands, because they represented to us the only security for our future. He did not suggest that the United States or Germany should not have coaling stations, but it had always been important that we should defend and protect our immense interests in Australasia and Oceania by seeing to it that along our trade routes we had practical control of the territory. When he first went to the New Hebrides we had practical control. France united with us and our settlers were the only settlers there. Since then the French settlers had come to outnumber ours, and they had a dominating influence there to-day which we ought to have in view of the contiguity of those islands to us. He was making this plea on grounds of high policy, that we should not give away an item or an atom of our grave responsibilities in these islands regarding natives or anything else, because if we did we should give away our influence, which was the most important asset we had. We were obliged to see to it that the several millions of people who lived in Australasia, and who were building up a nationality and a great civilisation there, were not dissatisfied with the arrangements which we made. The Australians had always been right in the policy of the South Pacific. They were right regarding New Guinea, Fiji, and Samoa, not because they were wiser, but because of their contiguity and their experience, and because they understood the situation. We should do everything to develop British interests in the New Hebrides, because it made not for the aggrandisement of the Empire or of Australia, but for the development of our trade, and the security of our trade routes; and, more important than anything else, since we had taken the responsibility regarding the natives there, it made for a strong position for ourselves for the future in the face of the vastly developing influence of France in those islands, to stand for the rights of the natives, and for their welfare. If we strongly defended and established a position now it would be much easier for us than when in days to come our position, commercially and politically, was weakened there. With the *entente cordiale* so strongly developed in the mind of both nations now, any effort to clear the situation and establish our relations regarding the natives upon a surer basis would receive the warm support of the authorities in France.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean) said he had made a gallant attempt to get hold of the actual Vote before he rose, in order that he might once more discover what was in order on this occasion and what was not. It would be difficult for the Under-Secretary in his reply to cover the ground covered by the hon. Member for Gravesend without going outside the bounds of the Vote. For instance, there was a flavour of the well-known naval heresy of believing that trade routes were controlled by naval stations, whereas the fact was that they could only be controlled by a superiority of naval force over the force which was likely to attack them. The opinion that we ever should have been in a position to control the whole of the trade routes across the Pacific by holding every station which might be of some conceivable value, at our own expense, without a contribution towards holding them, was moonshine, if he might say so. With regard to the New Hebrides, undoubtedly Australian interest had always been clearly defined from the time when the great protest was made by Mr. Deakin against Lord Salisbury's cession of the New Hebrides to France in 1887, which Lord Salisbury had to get out of at a high price. There was a most mysterious incident about the New Hebrides Convention. Party had always prevented its being brought up in the House, but who was responsible for the Convention was a matter they had never been able to elucidate. Mr. Deakin stated at the Colonial Conference that he received in December the Convention almost exactly as it was afterwards signed from France, and he himself had seen it published in an obscure Colonial paper, before the change of Government occurred,—almost exactly as it was afterwards signed—as having been already agreed to in principle. He was perfectly certain that the heads of the Colonial Office, under the late and under the incoming Government, knew nothing about it, but there must have been some officials who had discussed the matter, and it had been treated as settled. He did not very much wonder if they did because it was a working arrangement on a basis which had long ago been agreed on. That we should be able to control the islands was out of the question, and it was only a question of arranging the details of joint control between ourselves and France. He came now to the portion of the speech of his hon. friend which opened the considerations which he wanted to raise. The series of articles which he had evidently read in the *Sydney Morning Herald* were full of statements which would not bear investigation. He doubted whether successive Governments had wilfully refused territories, such as those they were specially debating, without very strong reasons. In every case it was a matter of picking and choosing, and the balance ought to be against rather than in favour of extension. But where we were forced into these new dominions at great and continuing cost, even in this case of British East Africa, we were deliberately entering on a course laden with mischief, and, even if in the interests of the Empire it must be undertaken, full of dangers of the most horrible description, and they ought to do so in every case with their eyes wide open. British East Africa was no exceptional case. It was a typical Colony. In the essentials of the difficulties it presented it was like Ceylon. There was, in Ceylon, a great deal of low tropical land, and a great deal of high land where Europeans could live. There was a great and flourishing white population, but the labour was all black. In countries like these we had always been in the past led on step by step. After expending a great deal of money and incurring great responsibilities we were asked to give self-government. Then hut taxes and poll taxes were imposed and customs duties were raised on food, the natives paying almost the whole of the taxation which was spent ultimately on bringing in some better form of labour to compete with the natives who were said to be idle. Then, finally, after refusing it for years and years upon perfectly sound grounds, what was called full self-government was granted. Lord Kimberley, after refusing self-government to Natal in the most definite way ended by being wearied and worried into granting it. Then, as in Ceylon, as in Demerara, as in Jamaica, came something which was dignified into the name of a rebellion or a rising, and then they had martial law—the will of a frightened Government, or a frightened subordinate. It was a sort of a Devil's chain in which we involved ourselves whenever we went to a country of this kind. It might have to be faced, but it must be faced with full consideration of what we were coming to and where we were going, always at great cost. In the case of the West Indies he had often declared that the sham self-government by local Council was not democratic in any sense, and that in those cases where full self-government was obviously impossible, there was much to be said for enlightened despotism. As in such cases the elective Council was a planter oligarchy, the rule of a first-class Governor, tactful as well as strong, was best for the white minority and for the black majority alike. As had been said by a great supporter of autocracy in Russia, "Autocracy needs an autocrat," and the difficulty was to find him among Colonial Governors. The best men were ambitious, and consequently they would not stay long. Obviously in this case, although those who visited the country and received kindness from the Governor spoke as well as they could of him, there seemed to have been incidents which threw doubt upon the tact and strength of the Governor. However that might be, his policy had been supported by this House and they should not overlook the difficulty of having to rely upon native police and upon interpreters who were worse than the police, if that were possible. The difficulties in his way had been tremendous, and they were all desirous of supporting anything like a sound policy. In the West Indies and in such a Colony as British East Africa those who were extreme Radicals must not be under the illusion of believing that a Council, even with some show of being an elective Council, was a Liberal institution, or that it was necessarily on the side of the natives who formed a great majority of the people of the country. That was not the case, because it was a veiled oligarchy of the worst description, only rendered tolerable by the fact that the majority of the planters being of good stuff did the best they could under very difficult circumstances. The system itself was as bad as possible, and it was distinctly on the capitalist side. They raised their taxation from the labourer, and they brought in outside labour to compete with native labour. He wished to support the words which fell from the hon. Member who opened this debate as to the desirability of maintaining the inviolable character of the native reserves. The land which was left ought to be made secure to them beyond all possible doubt. They ought to support the suggestions which had been made by the hon. Member as to mitigating the sharpness of the pass law, which although it might be thought necessary by the people on the spot, was always viewed with suspicion by hon. Members of this House and was revolting to the ordinary European mind. The choice of Governors was affected by the considerations which the late Secretary of State to the Colonies had put before the House. If they could get a higher type of general supervision, such as had been exercised by Sir Harry Johnstone both in East and in West Africa, or by Sir Frederick Lugard, there would be something to be said for the trial of such a scheme. In the case of the West Indies they had made experiments of that kind and no doubt there was some hope in that direction for the future. The Lugard experiment was tried, because he was at home for a long time and exercised a general direction over the Dominions he ruled. He had also ruled in similar fashion previously on the other side of Africa, in Uganda. At any rate they might support the suggestions which had been made as a tentative experiment. He wished, however, to protest against the constant pressure put upon Governments to grant sham representative institutions in these cases. That was a bad step in itself, and it generally led to a worse step, viz., the pressure of the locality to obtain full self-governing institutions, unsuitable to countries always destined to rely on black labour.

*MR. EVELYN CECIL (Aston Manor) desired to say a few words in support of the arguments which had been put forward in favour of an improved direct communication with East Africa. This view had been supported by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland and the hon. Member for Gravesend, and it had many supporters in various quarters of the House. He wished to remind the Committee that it was one of a number of recommendations proposed by the Steamship Subsidies Committee over which he had the honour to preside in 1902, and although many of those recommendations had already been carried out by the late Government and the present Government, this was one of the important ones which still remained outstanding, and which he hoped very soon would also be carried out. The general principle upon which mail subsidies were granted were that they should be for value received taking into consideration the speed and excellence of the vessels, and the regularity of the service, and trade interests as a general rule were not considered except so far as the mails followed the lines of great commercial traffic. Of course, there were special cases, but the particular recommendation of the Committee to which he desired to call attention was as follows—

> "That rare cases occur where in view of special Imperial considerations subsidies are necessary for establishing fast direct British communication, and that at the present moment such a subsidy should be favourably considered for a line to East Africa, where there is no direct British steamship service and where British trade is handicapped by foreign subsidised steamship lines."

It was important to bear in mind that that was the unanimous decision of a Committee which consisted of Unionists and Liberals, tariff reformers and free traders, and the special circumstances of the case were borne out by some of the liberal-minded witnesses who gave evidence. This was not the first case of the kind. The House would recollect that a Jamaica subsidy was in existence, and was proposed and carried through upon the recommendation contained in the Report of the West Indies Royal Commission, of which the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs was chairman. In the year 1901 a subsidy of £40,000 a year was established for ten years for Jamaica, of which sum this country paid £20,000 and the Colony the other £20,000 in order to improve Imperial communications as well as to pioneer and encourage trade. Consequently this particular recommendation was not quite the first of its kind. A subsidy was needed to establish trade in a new and promising market, and this was not an exceptional case. East Africa was a new and promising market which ought to have direct communication with these Islands. Such a subsidy might be withdrawn afterwards when the object had been attained, or it might be reduced as the traffic to or from this locality acquired a firm hold. It was important to bear in mind that in all these special cases the experience of merchants constantly showed that the trade remained with those who originated it, and as in this case Germany had suceeded for various reasons in pushing her goods into our Colonies the native merchants in East Africa were more disposed to continue ordering their goods from Germany, and it was very difficult for English goods unless they were put on equal conditions to be able to enter this Colony in the same way and at a similar profit. Every new business required an initial outlay and Imperial enterprises were no exception to this rule. This was a special case for Imperial enterprise. They had shown by past Votes of this House that East Africa and its improvement and development was an Imperial enterprise, and it seemed penny wise and pound foolish if they were not going to spend sufficient money to carry that experiment through at the outset. Why had they spent all this money on the Uganda Railway if the best communication with it and the main profit from it were going to remain entirely in foreign hands? A direct British line of steamers would be valuable to Port Soudan, and to the Shiré River and British Central Africa. That trade they knew had been going into foreign hands simply because some hon. Members believed in stereotyped dogmas which made them think they ought not to support any special lines of communication. The Committee to which he had alluded reported on impartial and not otherwise than free trade lines, and it was entirely a special case, and ought to be pleaded and granted on those lines. They might very well have laid the foundation for this particular line of steamers at the time they took out the material for the Uganda railway. That was an opportunity which was lost in the year 1894 or 1895, and if they had set their minds upon it and put their best efforts into it at that time to establish a line of that kind it was quite possible they would have had all the trade which now went through the German East Africa Line. What was the history of German competition? Nearly all the goods that went from Europe direct from East Africa had to be transhipped at Aden. At Aden there were constant delays and losses in consequence of the weather, breakage, or native thefts. It was true that the British India Line ran steamers direct between 1889 to 1892 from this country to East Africa, but he believed that the balance sheet of the company showed that there was a loss of something like £44,000 a year. It was a curious circumstance that the German East Africa Line, started in 1890, was originally supported with a subsidy of exactly £45,000 a year, or just about the same as the British India Company was losing. Though now the German East Africa Line had a subsidy of £67,500 for a more extended service, he believed that we could possibly run a service for our own trade purposes, and for strengthening our communications with the Colonies, for a sum considerably less than that. The way in which the Germans had pushed their trade was very remarkable. It was difficult to get all the German figures, and he had not succeeded in doing so. He found that the German East African trade rose from £300,900 in 1891 to £955,600 in 1898. He had not been able to get more recent figures. That was a gigantic increase, and one which might well be envied. He had looked to the British exports to Zanzibar and Pemba to see if they had increased to anything like the same extent. The British exports to Zanzibar and Pemba in 1892 amounted in value to £105,670, in 1898 they were only £114,217, and in 1906, as appeared from the latest Consular Report available, they were only £131,945. These figures were very telling and showed that we were not doing enough in this country. It was necessary to get more communication between these islands and the mainland. No doubt special rates on a scientific basis were granted in Germany to East Africa, but that did not completely account for all the results. When they remembered the great possibilities of development in East Africa which would be valuable to this country, he thought they should not neglect their opportunities. It was quite well known that Uganda was a great cotton growing country. A beginning had been made already in the growing of cotton. There was every opportunity for a vast development of that industry, and that would be of great use to Manchester. Why not have a direct line of communication by British ships? He did not see why cotton grown in Uganda should have to be shipped by German or other foreign lines. He wished to make one or two practical suggestions as to inter-colonial communication. There was a large amount of copper ore coming from the Hinterland which could be used at Beira as return cargo on ships taking out British goods to that part of the world. Another kind of return cargo which was probably possible was Natal coal. At present complaints came from Uganda that there was a great deal of deforestation in order to provide timber to burn in the railway locomotives. Deforestation in Uganda was likely to continue apace unless some coal fuel could be procured. It seemed to him that it might be perfectly possible to send out ships direct from this country to East Africa with British goods, to let them load Natal coal for the Uganda railway, and bring back copper ore from Beira, and so counter-balance trade in such a way as to make it profitable, after a subsidy had promoted its commencement. He commended that suggestion to the Under-Secretary for consideration. It was remarkable that successive Governments had not taken action in this matter, or, at all events, that this House had not pressed it more strongly than it had done when it was recollected that Consular Report after Consular Report from East Africa had been urging the improvement of the means of communication. The latest report from Zanzibar contained the following:—

> "One of the great grievances the British and Indian merchants have is that there is no direct British line running to and from the United Kingdom and Europe. They complain that at times they have great difficulty in getting their goods away by the foreign steamship companies. The British steamers have lately cut into the trade of the steamship companies of other nations, both from Europe and to India, and more could be done were a direct outward and homeward service maintained along the east coast of the mainland. It is now rumoured that an American line contemplates running direct steamers from America to Delagoa Bay, with a coasting service reaching as far as Mombasa."

Those who had been in the country knew how much American machinery was taking the place of British machinery. [An Hon. Member: Is it a subsidised line?] He had no information about the rumour beyond what was stated by the British Consul. The Report also said—

> "It would be a pity for lack of a little enterprise on the part of British steamship companies to see trade which has been developed, and is daily developing as the interior of the mainland is opened out by British enterprise, captured by others."

This complaint was constantly being made in the Consular Reports. There was nothing new in what he had read to the House. If our Consular officers were trusted, it was time that their recommendations should receive serious consideration. He did not wish that there should be an excessive subsidy. He merely wished such a subsidy as would pioneer and encourage trade, and provide direct mail communication with East Africa. He would do his utmost in season and out of season to bring that about. To show that this was not a tariff reform proposal—hon. Gentlemen opposite might think there was something insidious of that kind behind it—he would quote evidence which was given before the Steamship Subsidies Commission in 1902 by Sir Spencer Walpole, who was a member of the Cobden Club and for many years Secretary to the Post Office. In answer to the hon. Member for Pontefract he said—

> "If you thought it right to have a direct mail line to Zanzibar for Imperial purposes it would come within my principle, and you ought to establish it. I confess I thought till I came into this room that there was direct communication there."

It was a very sound principle, and he should like to commend it to the Colonial Office for their very best consideration, and to urge that this line should be established as soon as possible.

Colonel SEELY said that the debate had ranged over a wide field. The late Colonial Secretary had referred to his scheme for bringing the Colonial Office into closer touch with the Governors of the Crown Colonies. He was acquainted with the scheme as the right hon. Gentleman had left it, and he thought that everyone must sympathise with the object that the right hon. Gentleman had in view. There could be no doubt that misunderstandings arose owing to the lack of this close touch, and during the short time that he had been in office he had often felt this want acutely. It was often said: "How easy it would be to get over any kind of difficulty if the men were on the spot instead of having to communicate with them by telegraph." Lord Elgin, having considered the matter fully, had decided against the scheme as it stood for two reasons. First, because it was necessary for the Colonial Office to criticise the action of the Governors from time to time. But if they were to have a Governor walking into the Colonial Office the morning after some action of his had been disapproved co-operation would be more difficult, and the position would not tend to promote more cordial relations. He would not say that this was an insuperable objection, but it had to be borne in mind, and it had certainly weighed with Lord Elgin and the Colonial Office. There was another difficulty which, he thought, the right hon. Gentleman did not fully appreciate when he made the proposal. The proposal was that the Governors should come over and spend part of their time here, and that they should come to the Colonial Office as in some official capacity. It was also suggested that they should come over during the unhealthy season of their own Colonies, and that, in this way, they would be enabled to keep them there for seven or eight years and so get that continuity of policy in which would be found the most efficient administration. Yes, but what about the Deputy-Governor? Was he to be condemned for seven or eight years to be always there during the unhealthy season? That was a really practical objection to the proposal, and hitherto no way had been found out of the difficulty. Everyone who had read, as he had read, the Memorandum left by the right hon. Gentleman, realised to the full that his main contentions were absolutely true and just, and they hoped to succeed in carrying out some portion of his scheme, though he should imagine, from what he had been told, in another manner. The hon. Member for Aston, who had been Chairman of a Committee on the subject, had asked him a question in regard to a subsidy to run a line of steamers to British East Africa. It was quite true that we had spent large, almost vast, sums on making railways to Uganda and elsewhere. It was also true that at least one of them was paying its way.

*Mr. REES: Which one?

Colonel SEELY: The Uganda Railway might be said, in one aspect of the case, to be paying its way. It paid a great deal more than anybody ever anticipated. But the question was asked, why did we allow Germany to have the trade from this country or elsewhere to the port of embarcation? There was always the question of pounds, shillings and pence. This was not a matter of sentiment, but of cash, and if he found that British goods were not conveyed in British ships, but that, as in this particular case, the German taxpayer was paying directly to enable British goods to be carried to a British port at a cheaper rate than we could do it ourselves, it seemed to him that, except for the loss that fell on the German taxpayer, there was something to be said for the arrangement.

*Mr. EVELYN CECIL said that the subsidy introduced far more German than British, goods. German goods thus obtained a footing from which British goods could not oust them.

Colonel SEELY said the hon. Gentleman was in error. A great quantity, in fact the largest part, of the goods carried on these German ships were British goods. That was part of the hon. Gentleman's own contention. [Mr. Evelyn Cecil dissented.] And why were they carried on German ships? Because the German taxpayer paid a large subsidy to run these ships. That did not fill him with horror, and, while there was a good deal to be said for preventing the complete disappearance of the British flag from any part of the sea, he confessed there was nothing here to fill them with alarm. The hon. Member said he was not in favour of an extravagant subsidy, but would it not be an extravagant subsidy? The right hon. Gentleman, he thought, suggested £50,000 or £60,000. The information in their possession was that they could not get a service for that amount, and that it was doubtful whether they could get it for a subsidy of £80,000. The Colonial Office had recently made inquiry on this subject, and they could get no lower offer at present than the sum he had named. Was it worth while? For the moment they said "No," and, while he fully sympathised with the view that they did not wish to see the British flag disappear, so long as we had more than half the tonnage of the world and so long as the British flag predominated enormously in every part of the world, they could not spend an unusually large sum on a shipping subsidy in a case where British goods were being carried, by a more or less satisfactory service, at the cost of the German taxpayer. A question had been raised with regard to the Governor and the members of the Legislative Council who had been suspended—Lord Delamere and Mr. Bailey—and he had been asked directly by the hon. Member for Blackpool what action the Government had taken or would take. His Majesty's Governmentr poposed to support the Governor of East Africa to the full. They thought the action he took was perfectly right and perfectly correct. They were determined that nothing like forced labour should exist, with their consent, in any part of the British Empire. They did not think that either of the members of the Legislative Council who were suspended would themselves wish to employ a system of forced labour; but there was no doubt that some of the proposals which they urged before the Governor would, in fact, have had that result, and therefore the Government were of opinion that the Governor acted rightly, and they proposed to support him to the full. Papers would shortly be laid on the Table of the House in which the replies of the members of the Legislative Council were given in their own words, and the House would then see that it would not be proper for His Majesty's Government to ask the Governor to reinstate these members until a more complete understanding had been reached between the Governor and the members whom he felt it his duty to relieve of their functions. At the same time, everyone must wish that they would see that the action they took was quite unjustifiable in the view of any Member of that House, and it was to be hoped that they would soon be able again to put their talents and services at the disposal of the Governor. The question of the reduction in the Vote had been raised by the hon. Member for Aston. There were three reasons for the reduction in the Vote from £191,000 to £138,000. The first was that there was an increased amount from the hut tax; the next was the largely increased takings on the Uganda Railway; and the third was the increase in the Customs duties. These three together made so large an increase in the total amount received from Uganda that they were fortunately enabled to ask for the reduced sum of £138,000. The Committe were glad to hear that, but he was told that they must not expect a continuance of the diminution to this striking degree, as the increase in the takings on the Uganda Railway could not be expected to show so continuous an amount as had been the case in the past year.

Mr. ASHLEY: What about the pass law?

Colonel SEELY said he was much obliged to the hon. Member for reminding him of that point. In regard to the pass law, he did not know exactly what steps the Government proposed to take, but he did know what they thought about it, and that there was much in the contention that the pass law worked badly, and that it tended to make blackmail easier. He did not say they could abolish the law at once, but there was every reason why it should be amended. The hon. Member for Blackpool had asked whether a poll tax might not be substituted for the hut tax. He should have thought that a better plan, but he was told that the advantage of a hut tax over a poll tax was that it was easier to count huts than heads. However that might be, he thought it was a very excellent suggestion, and he would certainly bring it to the attention of the Governor. Breach of contract was a more difficult question. The Government could not sanction any proposal which would be in any way likely to lead to oppression, but the matter should be considered. The hon. Gentleman was as good a friend to the natives as anyone in the House, and he must realise that any step which it could be shown would not lead to oppression of any kind would receive the fullest consideration, always bearing in mind that they must make it quite plain that we were in East Africa and elsewhere not only for the good of the white settlers but for the good of the natives. Might he say how heartily they re-echoed the aspiration of the hon. Member for Blackpool that no further alienation of native reserves might take place, and they knew from the Governor that no such step would be taken, realising, as they did, that it was their country, that we had already taken too much of it, that alienation caused unrest, and that there was plenty of room for all in that country. The hon. Member for Gravesend and other hon. Members had addressed definite questions to him with regard to the New Hebrides Convention. The hon. Member had pressed him to say that the Convention was not complete in every detail, and if it was not complete why was it not complete? He could not help wondering why it was that a short time ago hon. Gentlemen opposite were abusing the Government somewhat hardly for making the Convention at all, and that now the Government was to be blamed for not going on more quickly. They were anxious to bring the Convention into operation, and the delay had been caused by the fact that it was a most extraordinary state of affairs that existed there. The New Hebrides contained a population which, as far as he could ascertain, was the only population in the world which had not a Sovereign. It did not belong to this country or to France; it did not belong to anybody. At every step the Government had been hampered by the fact that there was no precedent, and that was the excuse for delay. However, progress was being made. Both High Commissioners had been appointed, and that was a most important matter. The British High Commissioner was Sir Everard im Thurn, and the French High Commissioner was now M. Richard. The Deputy-Commissioners, he was glad to say, had been appointed, so that everything was in order for proceeding to carry out the Convention in full. The task was difficult. There were no buildings which could be used for the post-office or the police. It was a very primitive country. He had reason to believe, however, that order was being evolved out of chaos in the New Hebrides, and that something would be done to make the place rather happier for the unfortunate natives, who had been much harried in the past.

SIR GILBERT PARKER: Will the hon. Gentleman answer my question whether there is joint responsibility or separate responsibility for recruiting labour outside the New Hebrides?

COLONEL SEELY replied that, under the Convention, this country had no control over the recruitment by France of natives for service in New Caledonia. We must rely on the well-known justice and humanity of the French in the matter. He believed we could do so. His hon. friend said that Great Britain had great responsibility for dominion or *con-dominium* in this matter; that we had a special responsibility to see that the natives were well treated; and that in the past we had led the way, and were not going to fall back. That was quite true; but we could not assert or attain the power. As he had said, the New Hebrides belonged to nobody. We had made a Convention with France by which some sort of order would be restored. We did not covet the New Hebrides, and we had been obliged to accept that kind of joint occupation—for it was not ownership—with France. If the question were raised, he was sure that France would resent the imputation that we should be likely to make better provision for the safety and well-being of the natives than she would do. Indeed, there was no doubt that France had been very near us in showing humanity to native races. He had looked at the papers which arrived that morning to see if we had any control under the Convention, and they showed that the Convention was intended primarily to regulate the recruiting of natives within the New Hebrides. Recruiting for New Caledonia was entirely outside the control of His Majesty's Government. He regretted it, but did not see how it could be altered without giving offence to a great and friendly nation, especially at a time when the head of that State was the honoured guest of this country. His right hon. friend the Member for the Forest of Dean had opened up a wider field when he said that in British East Africa they were seeking to reproduce the evils which necessarily followed the extension of Empire where a small minority of white men found themselves in the midst of a native population. The right hon. Baronet said they were led step by step, first, by trade interests, to take the country; then, by great and growing expenditure in that country, to give some kind of representative government to the small white population; and, finally, by the troubles which always arose under that half-and-half arrangement, to give what was called full self-government, which, after all, was only an oligarchy given to a few white men over the whole race of blacks. A great part of that statement was true. That difficulty must arise in any case where a small white population found itself in a small minority, especially if that small minority were composed of people of our own race. They were determined to govern themselves. A paternal form of government could not be maintained; they would not have it. The difficulty was caused partly by the merits of our own people. That inevitable fate must be accepted, and all that could be done was to hand over more of the work to the people on the spot. Although government by a small oligarchy had never been a good form of government and never would be, there was this to console them—that matters seemed to be going on better now, except in one part of the British Empire. Very strong reports had been sent from British East Africa by persons well qualified to judge of native affairs, pointing out that the natives had no reason to work unless they wished to do so, and that the land belonged to the natives as much as, or even more than, to the white population. These facts were pointed out with growing force by the white settlers in British East Africa, and he assured his right hon. friend that the Government did not lose sight of the fact that this House was primarily responsible for the unrepresented native races. The Government must work, as far as possible, in co-operation with our fellow-countrymen across the sea, and they had every confidence that those fellow-countrymen were growing in sympathy with the views entertained at home. The Government were determined to maintain the British Empire intact and its honour intact, and to see that it was a place in which white and black received unswerving justice.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham) thought it was rather unfortunate that they had not had the assistance of the President of the Board of Trade in this debate, because the right hon. Gentleman had paid what might be regarded as an official visit to British East Africa, had been in communication with the Governor and had had a unique opportunity of studying that country and its development. He would remind the House that the right hon. Gentleman had seen fit to publish in a certain magazine an illustrated account of his trip, although they had had no official account of his visit, and now when they had this debate the right hon. Gentleman was not present and they had not the assistance of his knowledge. The Under-Secretary had dealt with the matter as fully as he could, and no one would complain of the spirit in which he had spoken. He was not able, however, to answer some very important questions which could have been answered by the President of the Board of Trade. There was one very important point in respect to which he could not give a full answer, and that was with regard to the pass law. The hon. Gentleman did not know what step the Governor proposed in that matter; in fact, he seemed scarcely to realise the immense responsibility this country had for British East Africa. Here was a country which it was generally admitted had a great commercial and agricultural future before it, and this question of the pass law was of the greatest importance.

COLONEL SEELY said the noble Lord quite misapprehended what he had said. If he waited until to-morrow, or went to the Vote Office now, he would see a full account of what had happened and what was proposed to be done in the way of emendation. He did not know exactly what was being done, but he was fully aware of the general position.

EARL WINTERTON said he did not know himself what steps the Government proposed to take in the matter. The President of the Board of Trade had been in British East Africa, and presumably had discussed this most important matter with the Governor, unless he was too busy taking photographs; yet the Government were unable to tell them what decision had been come to, or what they proposed to do. Another matter which he desired to bring forward had reference to the unpleasant incident connected with Lord Delamere. It was obviously necessary on both sides of the House to avoid making this an acute personal matter, and he was most anxious to avoid doing so. But he respectfully urged that they were entitled to have a little more light thrown on this case. One could understand that at the time the incident took place there was a very great deal of acute feeling in British East Africa on certain subjects, but they could hardly believe that Lord Delamere and the other gentleman concerned would have acted as they did without strong reasons. That Lord Delamere should have taken the line he did everyone regretted, and everyone must support the Under-Secretary in sustaining the action of the Governor; but surely there was something behind the scenes which they had not yet had brought forward. It was incredible that a man like Lord Delamere and those joined with him would have acted in the way they did, or that the Governor would have taken up the attitude which he did, unless there was a greater question between them than appeared from the reports they had received. At any rate he thought they were entitled to emphasise the need there was for avoiding such incidents in the future. So far as he had heard in this debate, no one had attempted to hint that the same incidents were not likely to occur in the future. The whole situation was fraught with danger; and until these questions were settled one way or the other there was very great risk of further incidents of this undesirable nature. There was the question of white police which last year very nearly caused a similar outbreak. A great many of the colonists of British East Africa were in favour of a white police force, because they did not think that the white men and women were safe in the midst of the enormous black population. So far as he knew all that had been done had been the appointment of some twenty or thirty men, a number absolutely useless. If the President of the Board of Trade had been present they could have discussed all these questions at much greater length. His hon. friend had visited British East Africa, but they had not had the same advantage of studying this question. It must be the wish of all parties that causes of friction between the Governor and the white settlers should be removed, and he was afraid they would not be removed as soon as the Under-Secretary seemed to think unless the Colonial Office gave the very closest attention as to how the grievances which undoubtedly existed could be dealt with. The hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland seemed to resent the suggestion that the Governor of this Colony ought in any way to regulate labour. Surely that was one of the primary duties of the Governor of a Colony such as British East Africa. Surely it was his duty to see that labour was not forced or exploited, to see that the ignorant natives were not taken advantage of, and to exercise almost the duty of the Board of Trade or of a trade union in this country. It was one of the primary duties of a Governor to look after the natives.

MR. CATHCART WASON: Is the noble Lord aware that the suggestion made at this meeting was that the Government should actually call upon the natives to work, and teach them the responsibility of work?

EARL WINTERTON said he was not present, but he understood that the hon. Member laid down the general proposition that it was undesirable in British East Africa that the Government should regulate labour. But it was their duty not only in the interests of labour, but in the interests of employers, in a great undeveloped country like British East Africa, with a vast number of natives, to deal in some way with the native problem. The fact of our not having regulated native labour in South Africa in the past was one of the causes of the terrible troubles that had taken place, and were likely to take place, all over the country. The fact that the Boers exploited native labour in the most scandalous way was one of the primary causes of the trouble there. We ought surely to avoid the same state of affairs taking place in this instance by drawing up a set of regulations which would be harsh neither to the natives nor to the settlers. So far as could be judged from this debate, and from what they had read in the Press, the present regulations for labour in that country tended to annoy and harass both the employers of labour and the natives. The Under-Secretary shook his head, but he had given no answer to the fact brought forward by his hon. friend the Member for Blackpool with regard to the way in which the hut tax and pass law operated. It was obvious that the whole question of the regulations required to be very carefully looked into. There seemed to be very considerable danger that the whole future of British East Africa, which from a commercial and agricultural point of view should be great, was being jeopardised by the unfortunate system of bureaucracy, and because the Colonial Office in the last few years, and, he was sorry to say, this House, had very largely neglected and ignored the very grave problems which had to be discussed. During this debate, until the last hour, not a single representative of the Labour Party had been present; yet there was not a subject connected with the Empire which should be of more interest to that Party than this question of British East Africa, where there was an acute labour problem, which tended to become acuter every year, and which must be settled if the future if that country was to be saved.

MR. MOLTENO (Dumfriesshire) was understood to say that this was not a question of tariff reform; it was a question of trade not being sufficiently free. What was the reason why shipping did not go to British East Africa? It was because the place must be served through the Suez Canal. But shipping did not go that way because of the enormous charges upon it. The Suez Canal earned enormous dividends, but like the old robbers on the Rhine, they descended upon all trade which passed them and levied enormous tolls. It would be better if they got the Suez Canal charges reduced. The matter had been brought before the recent Colonial Conference, and he understood that Australia and New Zealand had taken steps with regard to those charges. An effort should be made by His Majesty's Government to get them reduced, so that British shipping might be able to get through the Canal on even terms with the shipping of other countries. He had risen, however, to draw attention to the enormous increase in this Vote. Ten years ago it was £109,000, and last year with the Supplementary Estimate it had risen to £1,410,000. The question of reducing this Vote should be carefully considered. Ten years ago the item as regarded the High Commissioners stood at £1,000; but he saw that this year it was £11,500 for salaries alone. And there were various other items of expenditure which might also be reduced. He suggested that South Africa should meet this expenditure herself, for with these payments we were really becoming tributaries to the Colonies. What was a High Commissioner? It was difficult to say. He was not a Governor-General. He had no *locus standi* in the Colonies. He would urge strongly the Government to save our money, to meet the wishes of the people in South Africa, and also to safeguard the interests of the natives by making the change he had suggested.

SIR F. CAWLEY (Lancashire, Prestwich) said he wished to call the attention of the Under-Secretary for the Colonies to the dearth of native labour and the conditions imposed on settlers in East Africa. As the hon. Gentleman was no doubt aware, settlers had to undertake to spend a certain sum of money when they received a grant of land. With the dearth of labour they were not able to fulfil the conditions imposed upon them. Several people, he was informed, wanted to go forward with their schemes. The money was already provided, but they were not able to sign the leases because they knew they would not get the necessary labour in East Africa. He was also informed that at a recent conference, over which the Governor presided, it was stated that between 3,000 and 4,000 labourers were wanted there now. He asked the Under-Secretary to take this great scarcity of labour into consideration, and also the conditions on which the leases were granted. Possibly the Government might be able to help the question forward.

MR. H. J. TENNANT (Berwickshire) desired to emphasise the point made by the hon. Member for Gravesend with regard to the New Hebrides. He had listened with great interest to the Under-Secretary detailing what had been done in that rather chaotic part of the world. The hon. Gentleman had informed them that the only part of the Convention which had been put into force was that relating to arms and ammunition, and alcoholic liquors. He would like to inform him, with regard to one of those points, that information which had reached him was not in accordance with his statement. There was a telegram from Sydney on the 18th of this month saying—

> "The latest news from the New Hebrides emphasises the immediate importance of the appointment of British officials to enforce the Convention, because French traders, alleging that gin is the only prohibited liquor, have unloaded on two of the islands in question large cargoes of wine, beer, and whisky."

He had asked the Under-Secretary a question, and he had said that he would cause immediate inquiries to be made. He had no doubt those inquiries would be made, but he thought it was only due to him that he should place before him this information which had reached him in order that he might bring pressure to bear on these traders and see that the regulations were actually enforced. With regard to the closer touch into which the hon. Gentleman wished to bring the Colonies with the Office of which he was Under-Secretary, he conceived that that was one of the most important functions which the Colonial Office had in hand. The House would look forward with interest to a statement of what was being done to carry out one of the recommendations of the Colonial Conference of last year in regard to the Secretariat.

*MR. REES felt sure that in commercial circles pleasure would be manifested at the proposal of his right hon. friend opposite, and that it would be gratifying to people concerned in enterprises in the Colonies and Protectorates if there was some system under which the Governors and administrators of those Colonies could be got at and consulted about the various works in which they were so much interested. Nor could he quite understand his hon. and gallant friend's answer upon this point. He said there would be difficulty, and it would be awkward if a Governor walked into the Colonial Office when the Colonial Office was about to reprimand him. But the Colonial Secretary was always a statesman of resource, and he could always post the reprimand so as to catch the Governor when he returned to his Colony. That was a simple way out of that difficulty. If that was too simple, might he suggest that although it was usual in Colonies to have another officer designated the Deputy-Governor, who took over charge when the Governor went away, there was no particular virtue in the title, and it was quite a simple matter to let the next senior officer administer during the absence of the Governor? Therefore he hoped the hon. Gentleman would again consider that scheme which he regretted Lord Elgin was not able to accept. He was making his recommendation entirely from the commercial and not from the official point of view, because he belived it was a good thing that there should be this frequent intercommunication between the officers administering and the Colonial Office. It was with great respect to the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean and with submission to the House, that he took considerable exception to what the right hon. Baronet had sketched out as the ordinary course of events in a British Colony, and more especially to the view he took of the planting interest. He had said that these European planters became a white oligarchy, and the Under-Secretary had said that oligarchy was always a bad form of government. That was rather a comprehensive conclusion, and it might be capable of argument that this country had been fairly well-governed by a great oligarchy. It went on anyhow, and he was inclined to think it was a good Government. The Colony which the right hon. Baronet singled out as his example, Ceylon, owed its prosperity to its planters. It was they who had provided occupation for the natives of Southern India, and it was they who in India had clothed the barren hills of Assam and other districts with tea. So much had they raised the wages and so well did they treat the coolies that these men settled in crowds when their indentures were finished. Ceylon, India, and Trinidad owed their prosperity chiefly to the planters. The man who took his capital into one of these territories and invested it in planting had interests which were very closely bound up with the true interests of the people. It was not a sham representation, for these men were generally sincere friends of the natives, amongst whom they brought a great deal of money, whose wages they invariably raised, and whose true friends he declared from lifelong experience they were. Take the case of Nyassaland, in which he was interested. He trusted he would not put himself out of court by saying he represented a large commercial interest there. Since the railway was made there the wages of labour had been exactly doubled. Those who made the railway had to pay two or three times what they expected, and the higher wage immediately became the usual wage throughout the Protectorate. If the natives could express their opinion they would say: "Give us the men who doubled our wages." He had no doubt the two non-official members of the Council of East Africa, whose proceedings he was far from defending, were representatives of this character, and even in regard to them, they might wait to pronounce judgment until they saw the Blue-book which the hon. and gallant Gentleman said they would receive to-morrow.

COLONEL SEELY said he found that an unexpected delay had arisen. A further communication had had to be made, but he expected they would be able to publish the book in less than three weeks.

*MR. REES said he was quite satisfied with that since the Colonial Office was supporting the Governor, and added that there were various matters connected with Nyassaland to which he desired to refer. For the information of the hon. Member for South Down he might explain that the Zambesi ran south of that Colony and was not "somewhere in Siam." The hon. Member for South Down illustrated in his own person by his speech the other evening the deplorable condition of elementary education in Ireland. He did not seem to know in what quarter of the globe were situated the places he mentioned, or how important it was to persons trading in Africa that the Colonial Office should cure sleeping sickness, and keep an eye on the tetse fly. There was a matter in which he was greatly interested which had been referred to since the Under-Secretary to the Colonies had spoken, viz., the question of steamer communication on the East coast of Africa. That question had been argued as one of free trade or protection, but the question was whether a subsidy would be a good thing or not for the East coast of Africa, and he cared nothing at all whether it would be classified by fiscal purists as falling under the one heading or the other. The question was whether it was a good thing for East Africa or not.

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): Where does England come in?

*MR. REES said that that was just the point, she did not come in. There was no English line at all serving these ports. It seemed to him a most unfortunate thing that those who wished to ship rails or other materials to South Africa could not do it in British ships. It had been said, and it was *prima facie* a strong argument that the British shipper got the advantage of the cheap German rate, which was lessened in proportion to the subsidy paid by the German Government. That argument, however, only carried the matter to a certain point, because when once these low rates had driven all other lines away from these ports, it was in the power of the German monopolists to raise their rates. Therefore, the argument was only good up to a certain point, and that point had now been passed, because that line of ships was now in practically complete control of the coast. He urged upon the Under-Secretary for the Colonies the serious consideration of what his hon. friend opposite had said, because many British subjects were interested in business on the East coast of Africa. Personally he would be very glad indeed to see a little subsidy given, and he could assure the Committee that business men would not inquire whether it infringed the scientific principles of any particular fiscal system. The Colonial Office had appointed a small Committee to consider certain questions affecting Crown Agents. He would like to speak on behalf of those persons, who had business with the Colonial Office, who had to make contracts with the Crown Agents, on behalf of that office. The question in which they were interested was, the *status* of the Crown Agents, as an outside Colonial Office, standing between contractors and the Secretary of State. He confessed the terms of reference to that Committee as he read them did not seem to him to cover the case so thoroughly as he would like to have seen, but he was assured by the Under-Secretary that this question was covered by the reference. As regarded the Council which had been mentioned he sincerely hoped the advice which had been tendered on this point by several hon. Members would not be entertained. The abolition of the Council in East Africa would be viewed with considerable disfavour and would cause alarm along the coast of Africa where a similar Council had been appointed for Nyassaland, which contained two members of the Legislative Council who represented the natives as well as the Europeans in that part of the world. The hon. Member for Blackpool had referred to the necessity in a primitive community of some law for regulating labour and protecting the labourer against a breach of contract. It had been pointed out that in Africa an employer might get labourers under contract to come at very great expense from long distances. The employer had to trust very much to their good faith and very often they left him in the lurch and he had no remedy. In such cases the defendant had no means and could not to any advantage be sued, and it was a matter worth the consideration of the Colonial Office whether or not some form of law, such as that which existed by way of criminal breach of contract in the planting districts of Ceylon and India, could not be introduced on the east coast of Africa and in the African Protectorates. He was glad to hear in the interesting speech of the Under-Secretary for the Colonies the statement that in his opinion the English law was not suitable for those regions. He hoped, however, some simple and suitable form of law to meet such breaches of contract as he had referred to would be introduced, for he felt sure this would be much to the advantage of those doing business in protectorates upon the East Coast of Africa.

MR. JOHN WARD: Would flogging meet the case?

*MR. REES said he had not suggested anything of the sort, but that where a man contracted with an employer at considerable expense to that employer who gave him an advance, and did so simply to run away, surely there ought to be some way of dealing with him otherwise than by civil suit for breach of contract.

*MR. BENNETT (Oxfordshire, Woodstock) said that he would make no attempt to follow the train of thought contained in the utterances of that amazing, and, indeed, unique exponent of Liberal ideals, the hon. Member who had just sat down. But he would remark that the system of oligarchy which had been so warmly eulogised by the hon. Member in question was held by most serious students of political history to be one of the worst forms of human government ever devised by the evil ingenuity of mankind. His only object in rising that evening was to call attention to certain grants of public money made to our Crown Colonies. Let them take for example the grant of £1,350 made to the island of St. Helena in order to assist the people of that Colony in meeting certain trade losses incurred from the removal of its small garrison. Here they had an island garrisoned by a company of Regular infantry and a handful of sappers and gunners. For cogent and sensible reasons of Imperial policy these troops were in 1906 removed from St. Helena. Immediately upon the withdrawal of these troops an outcry was made that the British Exchequer must make good to the islanders the amount of trade which they had lost from the removal of the soldiers. He had lived for a few years of his earlier life in St. Helena, and he hoped that anything he might say would not be regarded as ungracious towards the inhabitants of his former home. He had merely cited the case of the St. Helena grant because it was typical. It embodied a vicious principle far too prevalent in the case of our financial relations with our Colonies. For the life of him he could not see what greater moral claim the island of St. Helena had upon the British taxpayer than, say, any town or rural district in the Mother Country. Suppose, for example, that the War Office resolved, for good and sufficient reasons, to remove a cavalry regiment from Colchester, Canterbury, or Edinburgh, would any hon. Member of that House get up and claim a subsidy from the Imperial Exchequer because, say, the tradesmen in any of these towns who had supplied the troops with bread or beer lost a great deal of their trade in consequence of the disappearance of the regiment in question? The monstrous character of such a demand was apparent and obvious in the case of any portion of Great Britain; but if the applicants were Colonials no difficulties were made, and the British taxpayer was bled without further scruple or delay for the benefit of Colonials who were almost invariably far better off, man for man, than ourselves.

We had not neglected St. Helena in the past; we had sent her a variety of crowned heads from Napoleon to Dinizulu, and the despatch to the island of a large number of Boer prisoners during the South African War had brought the islanders a great increase of trade. But their theory seemed to be that we were to keep useless troops in a useless island in order to provide trade for the civilian population, and if we declined to do this, the British Exchequer was to make good any trade losses. He was afraid that the former prosperity of St. Helena, the golden age of the little island, was gone, never to return. The cutting of the Suez Canal had dealt its prosperity a blow from which it could not, of course, ever hope to fully recover, and these subsidies were, besides being unjust to our people at home, mere palliatives to the distress of the islanders. He hoped that the condition of St. Helena's people might materially improve without artificial aids like these doles from the central Exchequer. The island had no public debt, enjoyed a beautiful and equable climate, and could produce good crops, and it was worth noticing that its once considerable export of potatoes to the Cape was ruined by the high tariff imposed by that neighbouring Colony; so much for Colonial amenities in trade relationships! He found the same bad principle which he had instanced in the case of St. Helena prevalent all along the line in these Colonial subsidy Estimates. There, for example, was a line of steamers trading between Canada and the West Indies, and coming nowhere near the Mother Country at all. Nevertheless the Imperial contribution to this line amounted to no less than £13,500! Lower down he noticed that the British taxpayer actually provided the salary of a lecturer in agriculture in the Barbados! Suppose a grant were wanted from the Exchequer to provide a few lecturers in our English counties who might go round the villages and teach our people the advantages of co-operation, and the best methods of cultivating small holdings, what sort of answer would be given? Not a favourable one, he feared. Money was wanted in England for all manner of good and useful purposes—money to establish credit banks, money to make the Housing Act a real success, and so on in many directions. For such urgent needs as these at home no money might be forthcoming, but if a lecturer was needed to teach the people of Barbados the best way to cultivate their own farms for their own benefit, the British taxpayer paid the lecturer's salary without hesitation. He wondered how much longer the nation was going to tolerate these selfish and unreasonable demands from the Colonies? The only possible justification for Imperial subsidies might arise from the claim that they were made on a strictly business footing. The grant of money, for example, to a railway in Nigeria might be supported on the ground that it would develop large cotton districts and so ultimately prove of some real benefit to England in general and Lancashire in particular. But this claim could not conceivably be made good in the case of many of these Imperial grants-in-aid and subsidies. He hoped, in conclusion, that the present Government would not be content always to follow the same path in these Colonial matters, but would from time to time initiate, so to speak, an Imperial stock-taking, and weed out from our Imperial responsibilities these financial abuses, and so accord a tardy act of justice to the British taxpayers, the vast majority of whom are poor men and women.

Mr. WEDGWOOD (Newcastle-under-Lyme) said that Liberal Members had constantly made merry over the folly of France and Germany in paying sugar bounties in order that we might get cheap sugar and cheap jam. It seemed slightly inconsistent to suggest that they should now pay bounties in order that Lord Delamere, Mr. Bailey, and others interested in East Africa, should get their goods cheaper. That was merely by way of comment on the arguments he had heard in favour of a subsidy to British East Africa. So far as he was concerned, whether it was a decaying trade or a decaying port, whether in this country or in the Colonies, or in any other part of the world, he had an equal objection to the payment of bounties, subsidies, rebates on Suez Canal rates, or any other form of preference whatever. He was quite certain that that was the only possible attitude for a free trader to take up.

The right hon. Member for St. George's, Hanover Square, had urged that grants-in-aid to the various Colonies should be continued and not be stopped just when they were beginning to be paying concerns. He was very anxious that these grants-in-aid should not be stopped when it was bad for business in the Colony and this country also, and in order to put them on a better footing he was extremely anxious they should be made not as grants but as loans. The revenue of British East Africa and Uganda and Nigeria was rising every year. It had risen in Uganda from £108,000 in 1903–4 to £395,000 in 1906–7. In fact, the time was coming when Uganda would begin to pay its way, and no more grants-in-aid would be required. What he asked was that as soon as a Colony began to pay its way we should at least have some interest on the grants which had been made in the way of grants-in-aid. If money was advanced on loan instead of by grants-in-aid we should in time get money back from some of the Colonies at all events. He did not think that either the Colonial Office or the Treasury should miss an opportunity of recovering some of the vast sums which had been swallowed up in Uganda and British East Africa. It was obvious that all these Colonies would pay their way soon, and they would become profitable to the British taxpayer and trader sooner if we did not give away the valuable assets which the Colonies possessed. He quite agreed with the hon. Member for Blackpool that in British East Africa we had a great asset, but, unfortunately, it was a constantly diminishing asset. Every year we sold off permanently to private persons more and more of the public lands in that Colony and in all our other Crown Colonies. He would give one example from British East Africa. The sales of public lands there amounted in 1903 to 3,000 acres, in 1904 to 21,000 acres, in 1905 to 31,000 acres, in 1906 to 41,000 acres. In 1906 247,000 acres were leased for an average period of ninety-four years, which was practically as good as a sale, and only 4,500 acres were leased for what he called the reasonable period of forty years. Altogether, we had alienated almost permanently over 1,000,000 acres of land, in the value of which, with the increase in population in British East Africa and the expenditure of public money, there would be a constant increase. We, who were making the value, would not reap a penny of benefit. Surely it was good business not to part with assets which must increase in value. There were plenty of Crown Colonies which were not alienating their land permanently. The Federated Malay States only let land on thirty-year leases. There was another objection he had to this common habit of selling land. These sales were either made in private or by public auction. It was obvious that a private sale lent itself to all manner of jobbery and back-stairs dealing, and the State did not get the best bargain out of private sales. Private sales were recognised as the worst possible way of selling national land. Sale by public auction was better, but even that was not the best form of disposing of land, because it was easy to form rings. There were not many people in those Colonies who had capital to make large purchases of land. Even sale by auction produced very unfortunate results for the country that was selling its land. Lord Milner invented what was, perhaps, the best way, if they must alienate land permanently. No public land in the Transvaal was ever to be bought or sold without being put up to auction, the upset price being first of all fixed by Government valuers. In that way the benefit of competition was obtained, and the risk was avoided of rings being formed to give too small a price for the land. That was not done in British East Africa and one or two other Colonies, and he begged the Under-Secretary to see that in future these sales were conducted by public auction, and that the upset price was arrived at by careful valuation made by Government valuers. He wished to say a word about one drawback to the system of treating land in the Federated Malay States. A good deal of land there had been permanently alienated before Sir Frank Swettenham took the country in hand. In one of the states the Government were going to the expense of a re-survey of the country which had been so alienated in perpetuity, and in that way they were making the land far more valuable for its owners. He maintained that such a survey had always been carried out at the expense of the owners. That was done in the Argentine, in the Transvaal, and in Swaziland.

*THE CHAIRMAN: Does this arise on this Vote?

MR. WEDGWOOD: I think it is all under the Colonial Office.

*THE CHAIRMAN: This Vote is for certain Consular services. I do not find any reference to the valuation of land in the Malay States.

MR. WEDGWOOD said it would surely be in order to discuss Northern Nigeria on this Vote. Perhaps the best possible method of dealing with land in Crown Colonies was that at present adopted in Northern Nigeria, and which we owed to Sir Francis Lugard and Sir Percy Girouard. Originally, the Emirs held all the land as far as Kano, and all the peasants or ryots held their land from the Emirs, and paid rates for it. Now in Northern Nigeria we had taken the position of the Emirs who held off the Crown, the same as the barons held their land in England off William the Conqueror. The Emirs, however, had been changed into tax or rent collectors. They handed over sometimes a half and sometimes three-quarters of the rents to the State, retaining the balance for the purpose of carrying on local government. It was exactly the same system as prevailed in Bengal. Practically the whole rent of the country was paid either as local taxation or as general taxation. It was called a land tax, but as a matter of fact it was rates. He was extremely anxious that this system should be extended from Northern Nigeria to Southern Nigeria and the Northern Territory of the Gold Coast.

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is again out of order. Southern Nigeria and Lagos are not on this Vote.

MR. WEDGWOOD said he hoped the Under-Secretary would consider the possibility of extending to the countries he had mentioned the powers of the reference of the Committee which was inquiring into the question of the tenure of land in the Colonial possessions.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said that the impression seemed to be left on the Committee that the Labour Members objected to coolie labour from the point of view of morals. What they objected to was subsidies being granted to planters in connection with the supply of coolie labour. They saw no reason why planters had any right to be treated differently from other employers of labour in the Colonies.

MR. REES said he knew of no subsidies.

*MR. SUMMERBELL said that subsidies or grants had been mentioned as having been given to planters in connection with the introduction of coolie labour. The Labour Party objected to grants or subsidies being given out of the taxes of this country or out of the taxes of the Colonies for such a purpose. The coolie labour so introduced had reduced the rate of wages paid in one of the Colonies from 60 to 32 cents a day. There was plenty of labour already to be had in the Colonies if only the planters would pay a proper wage.

COLONEL SEELY said that perhaps the Committee would like him to say a few words in reply to the criticisms that had been made. His hon. friend the Member for Montgomery Burghs had urged again the question of subsidies to steamers to East Africa. He could assure the hon. Member that the matter was receiving consideration. But with regard to the alleged amount of trade lost to this country, in point of fact there had been an increase in the amount of British goods sent to East Africa to a very great and striking extent, while of German goods there had been a positive decrease. The imports from the United Kingdom had increased by £62,000, and the imports from British possessions had increased by £48,000, whereas the imports from Germany had decreased by £5,000.

MR. REES: To East Africa proper?

COLONEL SEELEY: To East Africa proper. The total trade was even more striking. The increase for the United Kingdom was £427,000, and for Germany £48,000. At the same time he quite agreed that we should keep a close watch on these matters. An hon. Member had asked a question in regard to breach of contracts. That would be carefully considered. He did not think it would be wise that breach of contract should be made a criminal offence. In regard to Crown Agents, that did not arise on this Vote, but he would give all information on the matter as to the arrangement come to with these gentlemen when the proper Vote was reached. The hon. Member for the Woodstock division had referred to the grant to St. Helena. That grant was fully justified because the military who formerly formed so large a proportion of that population —one to three—had been withdrawn from the island, and it was obvious that great hardship—amounting to almost a cataclysm or an earthquake—had been caused. A very large proportion of the small population had been deprived of their means of subsistence by the removal of the garrison, and, as he had said, the grant was fully justified. The hon. Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme had raised the very interesting question of the alienation of land in Crown Colonies. The Colonial Office were fully alive to it, and the Committee which was about to sit on the subject would carefully consider all the points raised by the hon. Member. It was not proposed to allow the native land reserves in East Africa to be permanently enroached upon. A question had been asked as to a High Commissioner for Johannesburg. That matter was very important no doubt, but he could not take any steps in regard to it at present. The hon. Member for Berwickshire had raised the question of the imports of gin into the New Hebrides by French traders and said that the import of all kinds of liquor should be prohibited in an equal degree. The High Commissioner of the Pacific would make a report on the subject. The Colonial Office had taken note of the point raised by the hon. Gentleman opposite in regard to labour in the West Indies, but he did not think that the particular suggestion made by the hon. Gentleman could be entertained. It was a fact that coolie labour was imported into the West Indian Islands very considerably, but it was not quite true to say that the coolies displaced native labour. He had had a conversation with the Governor of Jamaica who had very strong views on the subject of the natives, and he assured him that the work done by imported labour was work that would not be done by indigenous labour. Of course the actual condition of the labourers must in every case be made all that was desirable, nor was it desired that the coolies should lower the native wages. He was assured that they did not; but he undertook that representations should be made on the subject to the proper authorities. He hoped the Committee would now allow the Vote to pass.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) called attention to what, in his opinion, appeared to be a strange vagary in our system of finance. He noticed in the Votes that it was expected that we should receive £20,000 from the Gold Coast Colony in respect to their debt to us. In 1905–6 and again in 1906–7 the Committee was informed that the Gold Coast was going to pay us no less a sum than £100,000. That no doubt greatly influenced the Committee in voting the grant-in-aid. Yet in neither of these years had we received any of this very large sum.

*THE CHAIRMAN pointed out that this question did not appear to arise in Committee of Supply and was therefore out of order.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) submitted that appropriations-in-aid were in many cases charges on the taxpayer. He had known occasions when debates in Supply lasting two hours had taken place in connection with the appropriation-in-aid from seats in Hyde Park.

*THE CHAIRMAN said there were decisions that appropriations-in-aid could not be discussed in Supply.

MR. BOWLES said he bowed to ruling of the Chairman and would not proceed further with the subject. Another vagary in our financial system was the manner in which these grants-in-aid were dealt with. It seemed that they had to be subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor-General, but if they were not spent during the year in which they were granted no surrender was to be made of them to the Exchequer. He could not understand on what principle that arrangement was made. The only object of an audit by the Comptroller and Auditor-General was to ensure that such part of the money granted for a particular purpose as was not spent should be returned to the Exchequer in the ordinary way. The truth was that these grants-in-aid were free gifts. We gave away so much and there was an end of it. We never saw one halfpenny of it again. He, therefore, could not see that there was any utility in the account of it being audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General, and unless some advantage could be shown he would suggest that the practice should be discontinued.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London) pointed out that the hon. and gallant Gentleman had not replied to the Question of the hon. Member for Dumfriesshire with regard to the mail services and the payment of dues on the Suez Canal. The subsidies given to steamers by other Powers were protection pure and simple, and it was an extraordinary doctrine to be advanced by hon. Members opposite. Many of the ratepayers of this country who were interested in the Suez Canal had no wish to make presents to the shipowners, who were quite able to take care of themselves, especially if they were free trade shipowners. The hon. and gallant Gentleman had dealt with the question of the New Hebrides in a most unfortunate way. He said that something had to be done to make the conditions of the natives happier; but children were to be employed, not according to their age, but to their height. Then there was the repatriation clause, when it was to operate in another place, to which the hon. and gallant Gentleman so much objected.

Colonel SEELY: That has been altered.

Sir F. BANBURY said there were also the extraordinary hours from sunrise to sunset, no interval for Sunday, and no proper precaution taken with regard to the food the natives should have. Did the hon. and gallant Gentleman propose to see those conditions altered, especially with regard to child labour? The hon. and gallant Gentleman had also stated that the Government could not be responsible for the employment of natives outside the New Hebrides; that, therefore, the Convention would not apply to natives employed by France in New Caledonia. He said it would be discourteous to throw upon France the imputation of treating the natives badly. But the question did not arise here. The question that did arise was this. The Government were responsible for the treatment of the natives in this quarter of the world. The place apparently belonged to nobody, but the Government had thought it right, in conjunction with another Power, to interfere on behalf of the natives and, therefore, had made themselves responsible for the well-being of the natives in the country. If that were so, then we ought to be responsible for their well-being both inside and outside the country, especially when it was a question of forced labour, for it should be remembered that very often only the chief was asked and he had power to order his people to go, whether they liked it or not. Surely the hon. and gallant Gentleman did not suggest that France, a nation of great humanity, should be left free to act as she pleased inside the New Hebrides. Our responsibility could not be shirked in that way. France could not object to our entering into a Convention to regulate the conditions of native labour inside the New Hebrides and therefore she could not object to its being extended to the employment of natives outside that country. It made very little difference to the native whether he was transported to another part of the New Hebrides or to some other country, and he was surprised that the hon. and gallant Gentleman who had made such a reputation for himself as a humanitarian in the matter of the Chinese coolies should have dismissed this case so airily.

And, it being a quarter past Eight of the Clock, and there being Private Business set down by direction of the Chairman of Ways and Means under Standing

Order No. 8, further Proceeding was postponed without Question put.

TYNE IMPROVEMENT BILL [By Order].

Consideration, as amended, deferred till Thursday, 18th June, at a quarter-past Eight of the Clock.

WIDNES CORPORATION BILL [By Order].

Third Reading deferred till Friday, 12th June.

SUPPLY (CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9).

Postponed Proceeding on Question, "That a sum, not exceeding £792,376, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for sundry Colonial Services, including certain Grants-in-Aid," resumed.

Question again proposed.

Sir F. BANBURY, continuing his observations, said he merely desired that the hon. Gentleman should answer the questions which he had put to him in regard to child labour, and the power of the head of the tribe to force labour contracts on natives.

Colonel SEELY was understood to say that the question which had been put in regard to the Gold Coast was out of order. The hon. Member for Norwood had said that the taxpayers of this country were induced to part with their money on representations made in that House, and that it should be seen that money granted was spent in the way intended.

Mr. BOWLES said his point was that if money granted to a Colonial Government was not properly spent what could the Comptroller and Auditor do on behalf of that House? He could do nothing.

Colonel SEELY supposed that the resources of civilisation would not be exhausted, and that they would be able to deal with such a case. In reply to the hon. Baronet the Member for the City, he had not lightly dismissed the question raised by him, but he had not dealt with the particular aspect of the labour clauses to which the hon. Gentleman referred. The hon. Baronet, however, would find the reasons in a paper published in the Treaty series, if he remembered rightly, at the end of December of last year, and a very full account was given of the reforms which had been made. With regard to repatriation he would point out that the whole of this arrangement took place under the Government which the hon. Baronet supported. ["No."] Yes, indeed. The preliminary negotiations took place then, and he was sure that they were not conducted with undue lack of consideration for the native races. The repatriation clauses were now definitely settled. That could be seen from the series of Papers.

Sir F. BANBURY: What is the date of the Paper?

Colonel SEELY said it was a Paper published at the very end of last year or the beginning of this year. It was to be found in the Vote Office. It set out the despatches with reference to the New Hebrides by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. In that Paper was the definite statement of the Secretary of State that under no circumstances could repatriation be imposed, and that the words meant that the labourer should only be repatriated if he desired. In fact there never was any intention of repatriating the natives, and nobody wanted it. In the case of the Chinese there were obvious reasons why it was desirable from the point of view of some people that they should be repatriated; they were not considered to be desirable settlers. In the case of the New Hebrides there never was any question that the natives would be undesirable, and the clause was understood at the time only to mean in the event of the labourer wishing to return. It was a pure error not putting in the words "if he so desire." With regard to the children he did not think that he could make any substantial amendment of the statement made at the end of last session. The situation was this. They had made an arrangement with France with a view to framing regulations. He believed that one of the French representatives had a great regard for the natives, and he was very desirous that regulations should be made to check certain evils which existed; and no native could possibly suffer from the regulations which had been passed. If the regulations were carried out as intended thousands of natives would be relieved from an immense amount of real suffering. The hon. Baronet knew the difficulty of dealing with these matters, but they were trying to get the age raised and also the height, and they were endeavouring to regulate the whole matter of child labour which had hitherto been without any regulation whatever. He could assure the hon. Baronet that they would lose no opportunity of screwing up the regulations in favour of the natives in the New Hebrides. They were always glad of any protest from any quarter of the House to strengthen their hand, and it was a matter of perpetually raising the standard of labour in the country where the evils of the labour system had been most deplorable in every respect.

Sir F. BANBURY: There is the question about the head of the tribe, and his power to compel natives to enter into labour contracts.

Colonel SEELY did not think that was the fact, but he had had so many questions to deal with that afternoon that his memory did not serve him for the moment; he could assure the hon. Gentleman, however, that if he put a question he would be glad to answer it. He could assure him that he welcomed pressure on this matter.

Lord BALCARRES said the statement of the hon. Gentleman was not thoroughly satisfactory to him. It would be remembered that when the clauses were read across the floor of the House no one could say which clause applied to the Chinese and which to the natives of the New Hebrides. The hon. Member would also recollect that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs stated categorically that the New Hebrides repatriation clause was not obligatory. Of course that was obviously not the case, because nobody knew which was which. Now he understood that the error was admitted, and the hon. Member said that the words "if he so desire" would be inserted. He was glad that the error in that respect had been admitted, but the Under-Secretary must remember that in the Blue-book issued at Christmas last there was no acquiescence on the part of the French Republic to those words. It might have come since the time of the Blue-book, which appeared nearly four months ago. Certainly in the Blue-book there was no acquiescence on the part of the French authorities to our interpretation on this point, and the French words as they stood were of a character clearly without any option; they were wholly mandatory with regard to repatriation; so that unless the French had been persuaded to accept the British view and to insert the Amendment, the repatriation would continue to be obligatory, as it was in the case of the Chinese labourers. The Under-Secretary had said that he welcomed criticism; indeed, he thought the hon. Gentleman had said that he welcomed pressure, but that he had been very much occupied, and that these matters had had to stand aside in view of more pressing business. A number of questions had been raised in the course of the debate, and the hon. Gentleman had dealt with them in a short way. The raising of the age for child labour, the position of the chief of the tribe, the possible hours of labour, were all points which had been raised a long time since and discussion had centred upon them. There were some subsidiary points about punishment by adding two months to every twelve months of indenture, and other matters about the time-table, diet, and so on; but the three main points which were discussed a year or so ago related to the almost supreme position occupied by the head of the tribe, the matter of the children, and the hours of labour. He was bound to say that the Colonial Office, though it might be owing to the changes which had taken place, had been dilatory in the matter. This question was of very great importance. They knew that the tribes were very scattered, and that our naval force in that part of the Pacific was very weak. But no effort had been made. The hon. and gallant Gentleman would do well to direct the attention of the Department to the fact that these matters now were of old standing, that they had excited considerable interest, and that it was really in the interests of the Department as well as of the inhabitants of the islands that the matter should not be left floating as it had been for twelve months past, but should be finally settled one way or the other without delay.

Mr. JOHN WARD said the debate had been interesting because of the view it had presented of the treatment by England of native subject races. The discussion had shown that this was one of the saddest phases of our Empire development that could possibly be imagined. We seemed to look upon the subject races that by one means or other came under our sway as if they had no rights at all, as if they were merely food for our development, and were not entitled to any personal liberty of any kind, but ought to be treated as though they were so much cattle, without any human feelings whatever. That seemed to be the accepted principle of our conduct with regard to these races. He did not know whether this state of affairs had always been the same, but he assumed after what had been said that, although the condition of some of these subject races was extremely unsatisfactory to-day, years gone by could tell an even sadder story. While he recognised that the Under-Secretary for the Colonies was just the sort of man that would urge the Colonial Office to do everything possible to promote the interests of the natives, still he was afraid that those who were responsible for our Colonies, and especially our Crown Colonies where these coloured and primitive races came under our jurisdiction, did not set up a very high standard for their conduct. There seemed to have been fashioned in that debate an entirely different code of moral conduct towards black as compared with white men. He had always understood that to a very large extent the moment a black, yellow, or any other coloured man came under the protection of the British Empire, he had equal laws and equal rights with all others. That debate, however, had shown that we treated native races on an entirely different footing from white people. It appeared to amuse some Members who had been responsible for the administration of Crown Colonies that anybody should hold the opinion that black men should be equally treated with white. It seemed a conundrum to those Members, and they appeared to wonder where he and others who held that view could have come from. A black man, of course, knew whether he was dealt with fairly as well as a white man. He (Mr. Ward) held that view and he considered that it was the duty of those who represented labour in that House—knowing that in the past the same feeling prevailed with regard to the class they represented, viz., that they were merely hewers of wood and drawers of water, and had no rights of representation and no business to interfere in administration or in the making of the laws—to try to prevail upon the House to regard the rights of subject races as somewhat on the same level as our own. A Liberal Member had told the House during that debate that leases of land on the East Coast of Africa were only regarded as proper, and only recognised and enforced on condition that the particular portion of land that was the subject of the lease could be cultivated, and that there was a supply of labour for it. That hon. Member had asked the Under-Secretary to find means to compel somebody to work on these particular farms. He was sorry to hear a suggestion of that kind from an hon. Member who called himself Liberal in politics—a suggestion that the Imperial Government should go and take some black people from their homes and country which were just as precious to them as our country was to us. He had in the Soudan found the natives quite as patriotic as any Britisher he had seen, and they had fought and struggled for their own barren wastes in a way he hoped Englishmen would do should our country ever be attacked. It might be taken for granted that natives had the same feelings and instincts as to country as Europeans, and it was an unworthy suggestion that the Colonial Office should secure by force a supply of labour for the cultivation of farms for the mere sake of profit or of particular holdings and for the purpose of giving validity to some peculiar leases which he supposed really amounted to stealing the lands of these tribes. He should leave a suggestion of that kind to come from the other side of the House. It would seem more fitting, when one remembered that they were told in the case of the first quarrel with the Transvaal that possibly there would be a splendid opportunity for British labour, and the great Conservative Party afterwards introduced Chinese labour almost by force, certainly by fraud. He wanted to raise his voice against the idea that the native was a mere chattel, a mere slave who could be laid hold of and emigrated away from his country whether he wanted to go or not, and seized for the purpose of developing portions of the Empire that could not at present be developed profitably to the speculators who were taking leases in different parts, especially on the East Coast of Africa. He would be delighted to assist in at least eradicating the idea of the justice or right of forced labour of any description within the British Empire. It was demoralising to those engaged in the business and to the country as a whole. Whatever they might say as to the necessity of maintaining our supremacy in those countries, whatever views they might hold as to maintaining every inch of territory which the Empire possessed, the object of those who represented labour ought to be in the direction of giving subject races brought under our sway equal rights and privileges with ourselves.

Mr. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.) altogether agreed with the hon. Member on the question of subject races, but in this particular case of the New Hebrides there were very serious difficulties in the way of establishing a satisfactory system of control. He was perhaps the only Member of the House who had ever been in the New Hebrides. It was a good many years ago, but he remembered the lurid stories he used to hear of the kind of thing that went on in those days. It was simply a hotbed of crime. At all events, after the Convention things were rather better than they had been, but without the expenditure of considerable sums of money on police and frequent visits from warships it would be impossible to have any real control over the management of those islands, and over the export of human beings from them. He thought that, considering all the difficulties, the Colonial Office had done very good work, and at any rate it was a very great improvement upon the state of things which he remembered existed twenty years ago, when the amount of tyranny and bloodshed in that part of the world was something to make one shudder to think of. He hoped the Under-Secretary for the Colonies would be able to state that he would do as much as he possibly could upon this question in conjunction with the French Government and spend an adequate amount of money in order properly to police those islands and keep them under proper control. He knew that that was a matter of expense, but he thought they might trust the Colonial Office to do what they could in the matter.

Question put, and agreed to.

CLASS III.

2. £127,889, to complete the sum for Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain.

3. £400,345, to complete the sum for Prisons, England and the Colonies.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.) said it was very unfortunate that when this Vote came on the latest Report on Prisons was invariably from fifteen to eighteen months old, and he did not know any substantial reason why that state of things should continue. There were one or two matters to which he desired to call attention. In the first place he did not think that there had ever been an occasion before when this Vote was discussed in the absence of the Secretary of State for the Home Department. At the present time in consequence of a dispute which had arisen between the Home Office and the London County Council a very large number of women who were habitual drunkards and qualified to receive treatment under the Habitual Drunkards Act were being sent to prison instead of being treated under that Act It seemed to him to be little short of a public scandal that in consequence of this dispute there was not sufficient accommodation for the large number of women whom the magistrates of London would prefer to send to reformatories instead of prisons, if that accommodation were provided.

*THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. HERBERT SAMUEL, Yorkshire, Cleveland), on a point of order, asked whether the hon. Member's remarks were in order and whether they would not be more appropriate under the Home Office Vote. He was afraid that he would not be able on this Vote to reply to the hon. Member's Questions.

MR. PICKERSGILL said a large number of women were being sent to prison who would not go to prison at all if an arrangement was come to between the Home Office and the London County Council. He certainly thought that this question affected the Vote for prisons, because in case this provision was made the amount required in this Vote would be reduced.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think that what the hon. Member is raising is a question of policy that does not come under this Vote.

MR. PICKERSGILL said, that being the case, he would leave that point. Last session he pressed the Home Office to make two appointments. One of them was in regard to a woman inspector and the other was to appoint a woman as a member of the Board of Commissioners. The woman inspector was appointed, but the right hon. Gentleman declined to appoint a woman as a member of the Board of Commissioners. He desired now to press that question upon the notice of the Department. Unfortunately, the number of women criminals was increasing in this country, and he believed the same remark applied to most countries on the Continent. There was, therefore, all the more reason why the interests of women should be protected by having one of their own sex on the Board of Commissioners, which was the central body controlling prisons. The interest of women prisoners suffered from the fact that there was no one of their own sex on that Board. He wished to call attention to one aspect of the treatment of women prisoners. Anyone who had visited the women's side of a prison must have noticed the pitiable object which the women prisoners presented as regarded their clothes and their boots. It might be unreasonable to suggest that women prisoners should be measured for their clothes, but one would imagine that the clothes which these women wore might more closely approximate to the figures on which they were placed. It was not wise that the natural instinct of the sex to present a decent appearance should be so ruthlessly disregarded, and it did not tend to preserve or encourage the self-respect of the prisoners. One of the ladies who was recently put in prison, a Doctor of Medicine, wrote, in regard to Holloway Prison—

> "There are some habits and arrangements in Holloway prison which are neither cleanly nor sanitary and which would not be allowed in any factory, and would be reported at once by the sanitary inspector."

He was sure if a woman were appointed upon the Board of Commissioners the interests of women would be more carefully guarded than they were at the present time, and that was a point which he wished to press upon the Department concerned.

MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe) said that he found in the Report of the year under notice in this debate that there were still in our prisons twenty-six cases of corporal punishment, sixteen in local and ten in convict prisons. Sixteen of them had been birched, with sentences varying from twelve to thirty-six strokes and ten were punished with the cat-o'-nine tails with strokes varying from twelve to thirty. The subject of corporal punishment in various branches of the public service had been a matter which had been contested for a good many years. They all knew the great struggle which had been made to obtain a reduction of this form of punishment, and finally its abolition, in certain quarters. Thirty years ago it was held that discipline in the Army could not be maintained without the odious punishment of flogging, and it was only within the last few years that that form of punishment had been finally abolished in the Army and in military prisons. The abolition of flogging, wherever tried, had been a success, and there was no one who would advocate a return to it in the quarters where it had disappeared. He asked the representative of the Home Office to say whether it would not be possible in time to get rid of the practice altogether. He noticed that in every case where flogging had been ordered the offences were against discipline. They had always been told that corporal punishment was necessary, and that without it discipline could not be maintained. He believed he was correct in stating that flogging in Irish prisons was absolutely unknown. He hoped that as time went on this method of punishment would fall more and more into disrepute.

MR. JOHN WARD drew attention to the wages of warders in the Metropolitan prisons and in the other prisons of the country. Though the Home Secretary alleged that there was now no grievance, he asserted, on the contrary, that there was still a substantial grievance existing in the wages and conditions of employment, especially of the assistant warders, in respect of their opportunities to get on the establishment and in their conditions generally. He would like to know whether something could not be done to remove the grievances of that very deserving body of men. He also drew attention to the case of a warder who had been injured by a hammer stroke on the head in subduing a gang riot in Wandsworth Prison. The man had been laid aside from duty for some months, and now as the result of that injury, he was utterly incapable of performing any kind of work. He was sure all Members of the House would be surprised to hear that the Home Secretary had declared that no compensation was to be given to him. Some slight compensation had been mentioned, but it was out of all proportion to the serious injury which the man had suffered. He wished to know whether it would not be possible to reconsider this matter with the view to something being done for the unfortunate young man.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL joined in the regret that had been expressed as to the absence of the Home Secretary. As the Committee were aware, certain functions connected with the visit of M. Fallières made it difficult for some Ministers to be as regular in their attendance at the House as they were accustomed to be. His right hon. friend had, he thought, never previously been absent during the discussion of this Vote, and hoped that the Committee would excuse his unavoidable absence on this occasion. Complaint had been made about the date when the Report on Prisons was issued. If the calendar year were substituted for the financial year in the date of the Report the House would suffer rather than gain, for it could not be presented to the House until later in the session. Either the discussion of the Vote would have to be postponed to a late period, which would not be an advantage, or else the Report in their hands would be that for two years previous, and would not be even so up-to-date as it now was. With regard to the treatment of women in prisons, the Committee would be pleased to remember that the present Home Secretary had in the last year carried out a great reform in the appointment of a woman prison inspector. The outcome of her investigations would, no doubt, be a considerable improvement in the details of prison administration so far as the female population was concerned. He was not sure that his hon. friend was wise in suggesting that the clothing of female prisoners should be made less unattractive. In view of the fact that the female prison population was increasing a more attractive, or less unattractive, dress was, perhaps, hardly to be desired. The allegation of a prisoner who had been to Holloway in connection with the suffragist agitation, that the sanitary state of that prison was not satisfactory was entirely unsubstantiated. The Prison Commissioners and inspectors took pains to secure that the sanitation of our prisons should be as perfect as it could be made. He had visited a considerable number of prisons throughout the country and he had been impressed by the almost apalling cleanliness of the prisons.

the depressing spotlessness which characterised them. There was a marked distinction between the appointment of a woman Commissioner and a woman Inspector, but the question of appointing a woman Commissioner would receive his right hon. friend's consideration; he would not pledge himself that that consideration would be favourable. His hon. friend the Member for Crewe had again brought forward the question of flogging in prisons. The twenty-six floggings in prison in 1906 which had been referred to were a reduction on the number in the previous year, when there were forty-three. The hon. Member had stated that floggings were inflicted for offences against discipline. It was possible that some Members of the House who were not acquainted with the details of prison administration might not be aware that the offences for which flogging could be inflicted were of the gravest character. It should be remembered that the offences for which flogging could be inflicted were very grave, and were only three in number—mutiny, incitement to mutiny, and grave assault upon a warder. Flogging could not be inflicted on the order of a governor, but only by order of the board of visiting magistrates, who had to hear evidence on oath and the prisoner in his own defence. The sentence had to be submitted to the Home Secretary.

MR. JOHN WARD: Was it not natural for a prisoner to attempt to escape?

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said he hardly thought that in ordinary attempts to escape the prisoner was ever punished by flogging, but he would make inquiry. The cases of flogging were very limited and the infliction was carefully safeguarded. He wished to disabuse the minds of hon. Members that floggings were frequently inflicted for trivial offences. His right hon. friend was of opinion that, in view of the class of people committed, it would not be safe at the present time to deprive the warders of this protection. The position of warders had been improved in many particulars. The position of the London warders, however, was still under consideration. Later in the session there might be something to be said with regard to them. In the case of the injured warder referred to, it was disputed that he owed his incapacity to any assault made upon him. There was no riot. Medical examination had followed medical examination in this case. Six doctors, he believed, had once investigated the case, and their Report was unanimous that there was no reason to believe that the warder owed his incapacity to assault, and that there was no valid claim against the Treasury. An important improvement had been made in prison administration during the last twelve months. It had long been the rule that a remission of a portion of the term for which a prisoner was sentenced could be earned by good conduct and industry; but the application of the rule had been limited to persons in penal servitude or serving a period of at least six months imprisonment. The Home Secretary had made a new regulation reducing the period from six months to one month, so that now all persons sentenced to a term of imprisonment exceeding one month—and they formed an enormous proportion of the number of prisoners—were able to earn a remission. That afforded these prisoners an inducement, hitherto lacking, to be well-behaved and industrious, and it contributed to a reduction in the amount of the Prison Estimates owing to a large number of prisoners being released at an earlier date. Three years ago the Prison Estimates amounted to £775,000; this year the amount was only £720,000.

*MR. BYLES (Salford, N.) said that he regretted the absence of the Home Secretary, although the House was to be congratulated that the right hon. Gentleman had had so good an understudy and so extremely capable a representative of the Home Office in the person of the hon. Member for Cleveland. The question of flogging in prison had been raised. He thought that in this twentieth century that method of punishment should be entirely abolished from our prison system. The Under-Secretary had stated that the number of floggings had been reduced from forty-three in

1905 to twenty-six in the succeeding year. He did not know whether the Committee were to infer from that that the number of floggings was excessive in the former year, that they were larger than they ought to have been, or that more enlightened views were taken in the succeeding year, and that a number were therefore dispensed with. If the latter were the case, why not dispense with flogging altogether and substitute some other mode of punishment? Only on the previous day the Home Secretary had introduced a Bill which must have given pleasure to all prison reformers, on account of the humanitarian ideas which inspired it. He could not help hoping that that was an indication of the attention which was being paid by the Home Office to the general question of prison discipline, and that the more enlightened methods adopted in America and in some European countries in regard to prison rules and discipline would be thought out. A great many hon. Members had been very much shocked at the sentences passed at the recent assizes at Cardiff, where a large number of grown men, with a good deal of human capacity, were sentenced by the Judge to the degrading punishment of flogging. He had long felt that flogging was a brutalising method of punishment, not only to the victim, but even more to the man who unfortunately was called upon to inflict it; and in his judgment, brutalising to the community and to the nation at large. He did not believe that they would drive out crime and wrong-doing from any individual by the aid of the lash. Yesterday's Prison Bill was not the only indication which they had had in the present Parliament of the existence of a more humanitarian spirit in our prison legislation. Some of them had been engaged for a number of days in thrashing out the details of the great measure for the protection of children, which had been taken charge of so ably by the hon. Member for Cleveland. There were signs that the conscience and the feeling of England towards individual items in it were becoming more tender and humanitarian than they used to be. He did not want to encourage crime, but he believed that wrong-doing might be got out of any man, and that such a man might be led into right courses, by other means than this ancient and brutal method of punishment. The Under-Secretary seemed to think that the appointment of a woman inspector during the past year was a sufficient substitute for the appointment of a woman Prison Commissioner. A year ago some of them had endeavoured to persuade the Home Secretary to include the female element in the Prison Commission, and it seemed to him that, considering the wide duties and the responsibilities undertaken by the Prison Commission, it was extremely desirable that the woman element should be introduced into that body, and he hoped that they would also have that reform by-and-bye. He was glad to find that the question of the condition of the warders and their discipline was being very carefully watched by the prison authorities. Only the other day a complaint had been forwarded to him of things going on in a great prison in his constituency, and amongst the authorities in the prison, which were not quite right. He knew that the servants in a prison were very liable to internal jealousies and favoritism, which might lead to unjust and unequal treatment of those under them. He had mentioned this matter privately to the Secretary to the Home Department. He hoped in next year there would be further reforms and the entire abolition of flogging.

MR. WARDLE (Stockport) asked whether the right of association enjoyed by every workman in the country would be granted to the warders of the prisons. Up to the present time he believed the right had been denied. He desired to know whether the limitations which had been to some extent removed had been found to work properly, and whether the warders were now allowed fully and freely the right of representation. He also desired to ask a question as to the hours of warders. From the Return supplied by the hon. Gentleman, it seemed to him that the hours were too long; but he further understood that the Return did not cover all the facts. He was told that the warders in Dartmoor prison had been on duty as long as seventeen hours at a stretch. If that were so, then that condition of things ought not to be allowed. The warders should only be on duty a proper number of hours, and if necessary they should work in shifts, other warders being engaged for the purpose.

*MR. HERBERT SAMUEL said that one of the improvements effected by his right hon. friend had been to allow the warders under proper conditions the right of association for the purpose of ameliorating their conditions. With regard to their hours steps had been taken to reduce the hours and the Treasury had recently increased the prison staffs in order that there should be a sufficient number of warders to prevent the continuation of the overtime that had existed.

Vote agreed to.

4. £28,781, to complete the sum for Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum.

Resolutions to be reported To-morrow; Committee sit again To-morrow.

SUPPLY [2ND APRIL] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:—

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908–9.

CLASS I.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £473,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Customs, Inland Revenue, Post Office, and Post Office Telegraph Buildings in Great Britain, and certain Post Offices abroad, including Furniture, Fuel, and sundry Miscellaneous Services."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £342,900, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, in respect of sundry Public Buildings in Great Britain, not provided for on other Votes."

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £52,400 (including a Supplementary sum of £13,000), be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for Expenditure in respect of Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, and for the maintenance of certain Cemeteries abroad."

Resolutions agreed to.

SUPPLY [14TH MAY] REPORT.

Resolutions reported:—

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, AND SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE, 1908–9.

CLASS II.

1. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £5, be granted to His Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for Stationery, Printing, &c., including Reports of Parliamentary Debates."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £405,212, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for Stationery, Printing, Paper, Binding, and Printed Books for the Public Service; for the Salaries and Expenses of the Stationery Office; and for sundry Miscellaneous Services, including Reports of Parliamentary Debates."

CLASS I.

3. "That a sum, not exceeding £355,000, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for Rates and Contributions in lieu of Rates, &c., in respect of Government Property, and for Rates on Houses occupied by Representatives of Foreign Powers, and for the Salaries and Expenses of the Rating of Government Property Department, and for a Contribution towards the Expenses of the London Fire Brigade."

CLASS II.

4. "That a sum, not exceeding £35, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Mint, including the Expenses of Coinage."

5. "That a sum, not exceeding £8,420, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the National Debt Office."

CLASS VI.

6. "That a sum, not exceeding £338, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for certain Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances."

CLASS II.

7. "That a sum, not exceeding £23,178, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Civil Service Commission."

Resolutions agreed to.

SUPPLY [21ST MAY] REPORT.

Resolution reported:—

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS ESTIMATES, 1908-9.

CLASS II.

"That a sum, not exceeding £120,788, be granted to His Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1909, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Department of Agriculture and other Industries and Technical Instruction for Ireland, and of the services administered by that Department; including sundry Grants in Aid."

Resolution read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution."

MR. JOYCE (Limerick) called attention to the question of the preservation of inland fishing in Ireland, especially salmon fishing. He did not suggest that the Agricultural Department ought to look after this, because no doubt to them it was a question of money, but the salmon fishing was not looked after as it should be by the Imperial Parliament. The whole question of salmon and trout fishing should be gone into in a much larger way than hitherto, and money which would be returned twenty-fold should be expended on this most important branch of the industries of Ireland. To his own knowledge salmon fishing on the Shannon had greatly declined. Why, he did not know. The river was not polluted with a great amount of sewage, and the fishermen were pretty closely watched, so there could not be much poaching. The fact remained that the salmon were going back, and fishermen who could get a good living twenty years ago were now almost starving. He believed in a close time for the preservation of fish, but the fish should be preserved in a proper manner. It was quite another thing to see these poor fishermen hunted and harried as if they were not Christians. Last winter three poor fishermen were brought before the magistrates for poaching and the two magistrates were divided in opinion. One said he thought the case had not been proved, the other thought it had. The consequence was that no rule was made and the unfortunate men were summoned again. On the second occasion there were three magistrates on the Bench, and the case was dismissed. Then the case came before the County Court Judge, as good a Judge as they could have in any county and a favourite with all classes, and he, on the evidence of the water bailiff, reversed the acquittal of the magistrates and imposed a fine of something like £20 on these men, who at that time could not pay twenty pence. Consequently, they had to go to gaol, and in mid winter. The people felt so much for their families that a collection was made, the fine paid, and the men taken out of prison. There was something which was not right in the way in which the fishery regulations were carried out in Ireland. The fishermen had no faith in the Board of Conservators for the reason that they had no direct representation on it. He brought in a Bill last year and the year before.

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) asked, on a point of order, if the hon. Member was in order. It would require legislation to alter the constitution of the Board of Conservators.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN said the hon. Member was referring to a fact that he had brought in a Bill himself. He must not deal with legislative matters, but with questions of administration.

MR. JOYCE said he was only making a passing allusion to his Bill. The Board of Conservators was not at all so constituted that the people had confidence in the way it carried out the conservation of the rivers. He therefore appealed to the Vice-President to see that something was done in his Bill to remedy the present state of things and that the poor fishermen had an opportunity of earning their hard livelihood. Last night hon. Members were speaking on behalf of navvies, but he did not think any navvy worked as hard as fishermen, whose work was the most laborious he knew. They had to pull long distances in all weathers on the Shannon, because a great company owned miles of the river, and it was not, he thought, watched as closely as they were. The Vice-President and his Department might appeal to the House to widen their powers to enable them to foster the fish in the river by the creation of more hatcheries and to watch where the fish was poached in the most open and flagrant manner. At the end of the season the fish got up into the small by-rivers, some of which were only six or eight feet wide at the most; and boys and servants with pitchforks destroyed millions of the ova that would otherwise ripen and become perfect fish. He had drawn attention to this before and had advocated that barriers of some kind should be put at certain times of the season at the mouths of by-rivers and that water bailiffs should go to the rivers and watch this kind of poaching. This was a very important matter, and he hoped the Department would pay proper attention to it. If they did so, they would not have the fish becoming less and less in quantities every year and the fishermen emigrating because there was not a good living to be made. He knew that where there were thirty boats with three men in each twenty years ago, there were not ten now on the same stretch of river. Something might and could be done. If water bailiffs were authorised and made to do their work properly in these by-rivers, there would be more done for the preservation of salmon and trout than by having steamers running in the tidal waters hunting and harrassing fishermen. He hoped the Vice-President, when he introduced his Bill, would pay some attention to the matter. He hoped also that some provision would be introduced to enable the workingmen to enjoy a day's fishing. Sunday was a favourite day in Ireland for workingmen to enjoy a day's fishing with rod and line. They got out into the fresh air and amused themselves and caught very little fish; and he hoped the Vice-President would introduce a clause in his Salmon Fishery Bill providing for a free day per week on all waters. The men who used to fish in the Shannon had had the right taken away by someone who claimed the water, but legislation would change that, and he would give the hon. Gentleman every assistance in his power. It would be a means of recreation to great numbers of people; it would not injure the fish in any way, and no owner of any fishing would suffer by it. These three considerations he thought should induce the hon. Gentleman, with the assistance of the House, to give effect to a clause dealing with the matter in his Bill. If he did, his name would be handed down to posterity in Ireland, and the chances were that he would have a monument on the Shannon.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.) said he wished to endorse the view put forward by the hon. Member for Limerick. There could not be a second opinion as to the salmon fisheries of Ireland being an extremely valuable asset. These fisheries had become depleted to an alarming extent during recent years. His own object in rising to speak was to draw the attention of the House to the extraordinary contrast between the tone and character of the present discussion and that on May 21st, with the discussions on a previous occasion when a very violent attack was made upon the Vice-President of the Irish Board of Agriculture, on the ground that he had overthrown or undone the work of his predecessor. In one respect he had undone the work of his predecessor, and that was to the great advantage of the House. The last time, three years ago, when this Vote was discussed in the House, a Motion was made from those benches to reduce the salary of the Vice-President, and the whole body of the Irish Members voted in favour of the Motion and every speech that came from those benches was an attack on the whole policy of the Department. To-night there was no attack on the policy of the Department. Since the hon. Member for South Tyrone had taken charge of it he had been working in harmony with the public feeling of Ireland. The criticism that came from those benches was friendly. Many of them desired to urge certain aspects of his work upon him, but between them and him there was nothing but kindly feeling and sympathy, and there was no idea of moving any reduction in his salary or attacking the present administration in a hostile spirit. The hon. Member for North Derry had attacked the Vice-President in violent language and he had been assailed in Ireland when he first took this Department, and the Liberal party were assailed for putting him in his present position on the ground that they were making the Department political. But that was exactly the reverse of what the present Government had done. They on those benches had ground to complain and attacked the Department in the past because the administration of the late Vice-President had turned the Department into a vast political machine and had the entire funds and enormous influence of the Department not primarily for the promotion of the proper objects for which it was founded, but for the purpose of attacking the Nationalist Party. In the old days when the Department was first founded, they promised to give it every possible fair play, but they found that instead of being used as an organisation for the social improvement of Ireland and the promotion of her industries it was being used as a political machine, and they were obliged to criticise its proceedings in a hostile spirit. It was impossible for the Department to conduct its work in Ireland with any prospect of success so long as it was carried on in a spirit hostile to the Nationalist Party. The first essential for the head of this Department was to secure the confidence of the Irish people and to convince all sections that the administration was free from political bias. In his opinion the present Vice-President had carried on his administration in that spirit, and it was for that reason that the character of their debates had totally altered. The questions now were no longer political but practical. He did not intend to dwell at any length upon it, but desired to say one or two words upon the general scope of the work. He had always contended that the Department had too much placed upon it. It had to look after the fisheries, agriculture, and Irish exports and imports; it was supposed to promote industries, to take control of technical education, to watch cattle disease; it had control of the National Library and the School of Art in Dublin, the Glasnevin Botanical Gardens, the Museum in Dublin, the College of Science in Dublin; in fact he did not believe there ever was a Department which had such varied and multitudinous duties to perform. It had had too much to do and the corollary of that was that its funds were deficient. But while making that criticism he had to say that since the hon. Gentleman had taken charge of it he had done a great deal of good, and had worked in harmony with the people, and that whatever criticism came from those benches was not conceived in any hostile spirit, but rather in a spirit of co-operation, urging the Department to fresh exertions. He wished further to say something on the question of afforestation. It was a sad fact that Ireland, which used to be described in ancient times as the island of woods and forests, and was covered with fine trees, as might be seen from the passage in Froude's "History of the English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," should be in that respect so greatly changed. Now, it was a fact that in vast districts known to him, where for miles and miles there had been magnificent forests, there was not a tree to be seen, with the result that the climate of the country had changed, that great tracts had been turned into waste and bog, owing to the absence of sheltering timber. The destruction of the forests had caused great damage in the west of Ireland. The woods and forests of Ireland were gradually disappearing and the country was becoming almost treeless. Those who were in the habit of visiting Ireland were struck with the difference in the aspect of the country as contrasted with what it used to be. Nevertheless there still remained on some great estates in Ireland and on some of the landlords' desmesnes magnificent woods and forests. The danger was that in transferring the land to the tenants, the first thing the landlord did was to sell the woods to timber merchants, and Ireland in its scenery was being ruined by the destruction of these woods when they were getting ready for the sale of the estates. He knew of one part of the country where some of the roads used to be shaded with magnificent trees, and since the land had been sold those trees had been cut down and carted off. This was a matter of absolute urgency, because with the change of ownership the process of destruction was going on in all directions. In the course of the next ten or fifteen years timber would probably rise in price to double its present value, because the timber reserves from America and other countries were gradually becoming exhausted. Consequently, in the not very distant future, the woods of Ireland and of this country would undoubtedly become a very valuable asset. In France the fuel of the poor was timber from the wastage of the woods, and they got all their fuel in that way. One of the great consolations to the poor people of Ireland in past years had been that there was a plentiful supply of turf which they used for fuel, but in many districts that privilege was now passing away because the bogs were being cut out, and whereever that occurred in Ireland the hardship on the poor was exceedingly great. In some country districts in Ireland coal was now 35s. a ton, and of course the poor people could not buy it. The result was that where turf was scarce the hardship endured by the poor people was exceedingly great. This scarcity of fuel was a thing likely to spread in the next few years, and if no provision of the kind which had been suggested in this debate was made it would be very difficult for the poor people to get fuel of any kind. That evil might be considerably alleviated by a proper conservation of the woods, which would provide an abundance of cheap fuel at an extremely moderate rate and bring it within the reach of the poor. That was a consideration which, apart from the other reasons put forward in favour of the preservation of the woods and forests of Ireland, had appealed very strongly to him. For those reasons he desired strongly to support his hon. friend in the appeal which he had made for the preservation of the woods of Ireland.

MR. TOMKINSON said that there were millions of acres of land in Ireland well adapted for the plantation of trees. There were many ways in which the production of timber was an enormous advantage to any country. He was not at all disposed to praise other countries at the expense of his own, but he thought they did these things very much better abroad. In the Duchy of Baden the Government had carried out the work of afforestation systematically, and with advantage to the people. One half of the Duchy was covered with forests, and there were in the country many manufactories of wooden goods of all kinds. He was quite sure that the proposal as to afforestation was one which everyone would desire to support.

MR. MOONEY (Newry) said the Vice-President of the Board of Agriculture might be called the Poo-bah of Ireland, for the matters of which his Department had charge were very varied. The hon. Gentleman was responsible for agriculture, the College of Science in Dublin, the Botanical Gardens in Dublin, the Veterinary College, the National Museum, fisheries, railway transit, and piers. In fact he hardly knew what the hon. Gentleman was not responsible for. He quite agreed with what the hon. Member for East Mayo had said about the change which had come over the policy of this Department. Since the present Vice-President came into office he had taken considerable trouble to bring the Department more into touch with national sentiment in Ireland, with the result that it had now more chance of succeeding than it had ever had since it was founded. He wished to ask if there was no provision made in the Vote for the Veterinary College in Dublin. The head of the college was a man distinguished in his profession, and he had thrown himself whole-heartedly into the work of promoting the success of the institution. It was one of the few Departments in Ireland that was paying its way. The number of students was larger than could be accommodated, and applications had been made over and over again for increased accommodation. He admitted that the hon. Gentleman had tried to meet them. The present accommodation being insufficient, a good many students who would otherwise go there went to Glasgow and other places. Not only did the veterinary college lose the fees which would have accrued to it from these students, but Dublin lost what would have been paid there for board and lodging. He wished to know whether arrangements had been made to provide the necessary accommodation. Last year the hon. Gentleman was pressed over and over again to take steps for the carrying out of the intentions of this House in regard to certain piers in Ireland. The hon. Gentleman attempted to carry out the wishes of the House and of the Irish Members, but he was blocked in his endeavours by the action of the Irish Board of Works, which was responsible for a good deal of evil in Ireland. What did the hon. Gentleman intend to do in this matter? At present fishermen could not earn their living owing to the dangerous condition of the harbours round the coast. In fact, it was more dangerous in a storm to be in some of the harbours than to be in the open sea. How was it intended to meet the objection of the Board of Works to the scheme proposed last year? The description given by the hon. Member for East Mayo in regard to forestry in Ireland was in no way exaggerated. During the Cromwellian and other periods in Ireland instructions were given for the destruction of forests, and time after time, as the reports to be found in Irish history showed, hundreds of acres of the ancient forests were destroyed at a time. The question of reafforestation was engaging attention all over Europe. The hon. Gentleman appointed a Departmental Committee to consider this question. He himself regretted the appointment of that Committee. He regretted the appointment of this Departmental Committee the less, because it had made a most conclusive Report in regard to reafforestation, which it would be advisable for hon. Members to read. He did not know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer had read it, but he was sure that, short as was the time the right hon. Gentleman had been in his present office, he had begun to see that they were always asking for too much for Ireland. The curious thing about this Committee was that, unlike other Committees upstairs, they started their Recommendations by saying that there was no necessity for creating a new Board in Ireland. That was good, for the fewer Boards they had in Ireland the better. They had too many already. The Report went on to say that the existing Board of Agriculture had power to deal with forestry. In the Report of that Department for 1906, which was the last issued, it was stated that the number of acres planted with trees in Ireland had decreased, compared with the previous year. The number of trees felled was 883,700, and that of these 407,000 were used for propping purposes. That meant that these trees were immature, and should not have been cut down. In Switzerland the woods were national property, and the State derived considerable profits from them. The owners of the land had certain rights in the woods on their properties, and a landowner had told him that the system was that, where an owner was entitled to cut down a certain number of trees, for every tree so cut down he had to plant three. The result was that the forests in Switzerland were rapidly increasing, and so was the revenue derived from them by the State. There was a paragraph in the Report of the Board of Agriculture which stated that there were something like 1,000,000 acres of land in Ireland which could not be used for any other purpose than tree-planting. The Report went on to say that owing to State action in the past the woods in Ireland had never been properly looked after, and that the country had been devastated of its forests. The State was now largely becoming the landowner, and it was therefore their duty to plant trees and encourage reafforestation. This was not a question of asking the Chancellor of the Exchequer for money the expenditure of which would not be productive. The scheme submitted in the Report showed that if the money asked for was properly spent in reafforestation it would be productive of very good interest. It was estimated that the expense of a national scheme of afforestation, including the cost of the land, would range from £44,525 per annum to £32,000 over five different periods, and that eventually the forests would yield 4½ per cent. on the capital invested. It had been a subject of complaint from the Irish benches that the Commissioner of Woods and Forests drew annually large sums by way of quit rents and Crown rents, and it was said that in England and Scotland the quit rents and Crown rents were reinvested in lands for the benefit of the public. It was further stated in the Report that in the year under review the amount of quit rents and Crown rents in Ireland was something like £60,000, and when one of the witnesses who represented the Woods and Forests Department was asked how the money was spent for the benefit of Ireland, he said that £13,000 had been devoted to the purchase and development of woods and forests in Scotland. He did not think that such a policy was in accordance with the recommendations of the Board of Agriculture, or that it would be satisfactory to the public that large sums of money should be drawn from Ireland to be spent on afforestation in Scotland. Had the right hon. Gentleman considered this Report, and if he had, would he give some assurance that when the Vice-President approached him on the subject, if he was not able to give the money they asked for, at least he would arrange some scheme with the Crown Office by which the money now drawn out and spent upon woods and forests should be spent on the woods and forests of Ireland? That was a desirable thing and would do an immense amount of good. They were not asking for a fresh grant, but simply that money derived from Ireland should be spent for Ireland in Ireland. He hoped when the hon. Gentleman came to reply he would say in the words of the late Prime Minister that he had been a sturdy beggar, and that the money which was derived from Ireland should be spent in Ireland.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. T. W. RUSSELL, Tyrone, S.) said it was only twelve months since he became Vice-President of the Department, and this was the third debate that had taken place on its work during that period. He remembered the time when Irish Members—he himself among them—constantly complained that the work of the Department was never reviewed, for the reason that there was no one to represent it in the House of Commons and to reply to any question. At all events that mischief had been cured. With regard to the question of forestry, he was extremely glad they had the advantage of the presence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for this was a question of money. It was not a question of expenditure in the direct sense, but more a question of investment than anything else. The question of afforestation had been made urgent by the action of the State itself, and not by the action of anybody in Ireland, and a condition of things had been brought about which needed instant attention. Under the Act of 1903, the Estates Commissioners were buying estates all over the country, and having bought them were under the necessity of disposing of the timber. In the case of two estates, one in Tipperary with timber worth £5,600, and one in county Wexford with timber worth £6,000, the Department had purchased the timber to prevent its being cut down; but they could not afford to carry out this experiment all over the country. Besides the danger of timber being cut down, waste land suitable for planting was being sold. He supposed he was violating all official precedent in inviting the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to this question, involving no large expenditure on the Treasury, but a most urgent matter. With regard to fisheries, the hon. Member for Limerick pleaded for one day's free rod-fishing for the people of the country. He thought there was a good deal of free fishing. He certainly would not pledge himself to any such provision in the Bill under consideration by his Department. He admitted that the whole fisheries of Ireland were in a lamentable position. The Department, when created, received £10,000 for the purposes of the fishing industry, and they could not do very much with that amount of money. The whole question of the fisheries of Ireland must be inquired into. The fishing industry was declining all over the country, and unless something was done it would go out of existence. There was a Bill in preparation, and there were points in the hon. Member for Limerick's speech which they would be able to deal with, but he asked his hon. friend to shut off the free fishing.

MR. JOYCE: I certainly shall not.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL said the hon. Member for Newry had raised the question of the technical college. Under the Act of 1899 the Department was authorised to give £10,000 for the college. It had bestowed upon it £10,800 so that the Department had done rather better. In regard to the veterinary college, they again wanted more money. In 1899, the Department were authorised by Parliament to give £15,000 for building that college, and they had given £26,650. They had bettered their instructions, and had given an endowment of £200 a year for research purposes. The college was doing good work, and he thought it had a great future before it. Of course, they could not make bricks without straw, but they had done all they could with the money at their disposal to make it an effective institution, and he was glad to say it was effective and was doing good work. He had introduced a Bill again which would enable county councils to give more money to repair piers than at present, and also enable the Department to do more. He hoped the Bill would get through.

An HON. MEMBER: Will it enable the Board of Works to run the piers?

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL said the piers would be vested in the county councils, and the Board of Works would be shut out. Then he was asked when the Report of the Department would be published. It was a little late, but the Secretary of the Department had been presiding over the Forestry Committee, and a great deal of his time had been occupied on that Committee. That was the reason of any delay. It was now ready, and he hoped it would be presented in the course of a few days. The hon. Member for East Mayo had said something about the Department itself. He was much obliged to him for the way in which he had spoken of it. He did not want to say more, because he had not been long enough at the Department to speak authoritatively about it on some points, but his predecessor, whatever might be said of him, had undoubtedly done a great work in establishing the Department. It was a tremendous work to undertake, and the constitution of the Department was in many respects admirable. There was a Board of twelve and a Council of 103, and it was a perfectly independent body. He only wished that some other Departments in Ireland had the same freedom. After close observation of the Department's work, he could say that it was bearing fruit. Agricultural education was a slow matter, but he was glad to say that the improvement had been such that the exports in 1906 of the produce of a small agricultural industry was of the value of £9,500,000. which was more than equal to the value of the cattle trade which was the greatest agricultural industry in Ireland. The flax industry was growing, 10,000 more acres having been devoted to it during the last three years. In the County of Cork, where the flax industry had practically died out, the mills were being repaired, and the industry was being encouraged. Thus the education of the past few years was beginning to tell; people were beginning to take pains; and he had hopes that as time went on, the condition of the industry would get better and better.

Mr. GWYNN (Galway) said he should like to associate himself with what had been said by his hon. friend with regard to the change in the Department. There was no man in Ireland who had a greater admiration for Sir Horace Plunkett's personality and work, but at the same time he thought the Government made a great mistake when they asked him to continue in office and that Sir Horace Plunkett made a greater mistake when he accepted that proposal. The Department itself was, after all, the true monument to Sir Horace Plunkett, and he rejoiced that it was really becoming what he desired it to be. It had already been said that there was an enormous number of subjects covered by the Department, and a great many of them appealed to him very intimately and keenly. If the Vice-President could see his way to grant a free day's fishing on all waters, he should certainly spend the Sundays in his own constituency, because within the neighbourhood of the Bridge of Galway there were more salmon to be found than in any part of the world. His experience was that where they had free fishing at certain times they did not as a rule have poaching. Free fishing did no harm, such as was done by the poacher with weapons of destruction, like pitchforks. He, therefore, thought that if anything could be done to increase the area of free fishing, it would really make for the improvement of the fishing in Ireland. He wished, also, to press upon the hon. Member some considerations in regard to sea-fishing.

And, it being Eleven of the Clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS.

Resolution reported—

"That it is expedient to provide old-age pensions and to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of any Expenses incurred for that purpose and connected therewith."

*MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby) said that if ever a financial Resolution contained a demand for an open cheque the Resolution now before the House contained such a demand. The Resolution committed Parliament to provide "any expenses." There was no limitation beyond the explanation which had been given by Ministers on the previous stages that the Resolution had already passed through, and there had been no indication as to what amount Parliament was committed to, or what the country had to provide, and what they were now asked to do was to pass a Resolution authorising Parliament to provide out of the taxation of the country "any expenses incurred for that purpose and connected therewith." His first objection to the Resolution in the shape in which they found it was this. The whole of the moneys to be provided for old-age pensions was to be provided by Parliament, and it seemed to him that that entirely disposed of any suggestion that these old-age pensions were to be contributory. He had not been prepared to contend that under any circumstances, the only old-age pensions should be contributory. On the contrary, he at all events, was prepared to admit that it was a fair thing under certain circumstances that old-age pensions of a kind, and applicable to certain people, should be entirely provided, as suggested in this Resolution, by Parliament. But it appeared to him that there was a matter of principle which ought to be incorporated in a Resolution of this kind without which it should not be accepted by the House if the whole of the moneys for old-age pensions of the kind suggested were to be provided by Parliament. The matter of principle was that if the whole of the money was provided by Parliament and the old-age pensions were non-contributory, they ought to be universal in their application If the money provided by Parliament was to come out of the general taxation of the country, then, as a matter of principle, of justice, and of right, every man and woman attaining the age of seventy ought to be able to participate. But the effect of passing this Resolution would be that thrifty people would be taxed to provide old-age pensions for the unthrifty. It was a gross injustice that the man who had saved sufficient to yield him 9s. 11d. a week should have it increased to 14s. 11d., while the man who had saved sufficient to yield him 10s. 1d. was to remain at that figure. He was glad hon. Members opposite approved these principles. He took it that a wave of common-sense, if not a sentiment of justice, would appear suddenly to have broken out on the opposite side of the House. The two principles to be applied were, first, if the pensions were noncontributory they should be general in their application; and, secondly, if they were contributory they should be restricted to the people who contributed. The effect of passing the Resolution in its present shape was that the thrifty people would be taxed to provide old-age pensions for the unthrifty, and he was surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should submit such a Resolution to the

House. The right hon. Gentleman had said that if they relaxed any of the restrictions and widened the basis of persons entitled to receive pensions, sufficient money could not be provided. When an old-age pension scheme calculated to fall upon the whole of the taxpayers of the country was proposed it seemed to him that that was a subject which ought to be thoroughly threshed out. He was in hopes that, having regard to the effective criticism which had already been passed upon this scheme, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Government would have seen their way to have modified it so as to make it reasonably just; but notwithstanding all the protests, many of them coming from the opposite side of the House, the Government deliberately stuck to their original suggestions and declined to accept any modifications to remove the most unjust anomalies with which their proposition teemed. Consequently he felt quite justified in standing up on behalf of the taxpayer of the country and in a very few words making this protest against the proposal. If a man and woman happened to be married and living together their total income under this pension scheme was to be restricted to 7s. 6d. per week, whereas if they were not married and living together they would get 10s. per week. In bringing forward a scheme like that the Government were putting a premium upon irregular connections and immorality. [Cries of "Order."] Unless that could be explained and unless the Chancellor of the Exchequer was prepared to assure them that the effect of his proposal would not be what he had tried to point out, that was an effective reason why this scheme should not be accepted and why no Government ought to put such a scheme before the House of Commons. The appeal by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that for fear of increasing the burden the House should not suggest the removal of any of these anomalies was one which appeared to him utterly unfounded. If the Government were not prepared to bring forward a scheme which did not lay itself open to criticisms of that kind they should have kept their proposal back until they had thought it out a little more. He gathered that this old-age pension scheme was to cost £6,000,000 per annum. Criticisms had been brought to bear on the Chancellor of the Exchequer in which it had been pointed out that only £1,250,000 was available for this purpose this year. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated in reply that they had only to deal with three months of this year and that next year must look after itself. The suggestion was that that was a complete answer to the criticisms which had been passed upon the scheme. The reply to that was that this particular scheme of old-age pensions demanded £6,000,000 a year at least, and the mere fact that they had only got a quarter of the year to provide for did not reduce the £6,000,000 per annum which would be needed in the future. Although he agreed that they had no right to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he was going to do next year, they had a right to say when the Government were bringing forward a scheme involving the expenditure of £6,000,000 per annum the Government ought to give the House of Commons some idea as to where they proposed to get that money. [Cries of "Agreed," and "Divide, divide."] He was one of those who for many years past had given considerable attention to this subject of old-age pensions, and he felt very deeply upon the matter. He had made a very careful study of it, and he thought he was entitled when the House of Commons was about to deal with such a subject to say a few words upon it.

Mr. J. MACVEAGH: Give Banbury a chance.

*MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said he could suggest a very easy way of securing an excellent system of old-age pensions under the Resolution they had before the House. Inasmuch as there were in this country not more than 8,000,000 children between the ages of five and fourteen and as it was an actuarial fact that 3d. a week paid for every child between the ages of five and fourteen would provide 5s. a week at the age of sixty-five for all those children who survived he thought a scheme of that kind would be better than the one they were discussing. Six million pounds a year would be required in order to equal these weekly payments, and if that amount were set aside now and accumulated, say, at 2¾ per cent., all the inhabitants of these islands would, on attaining the age of sixty-five find they had 5s. a week for the rest of their lives. If they only began to insure children now in this manner there would be old-age pensions for everybody. The only possible objection to that scheme was that it would not come into operation for fifty years, but fifty years was a very short time in the life of a country. But the fact that everybody would get a pension was to be taken into consideration, especially if that scheme could be accompanied by, say, £1,500,000 being put aside every year by the State and added to contributions from the employers and the workmen, so that there might be some addition to the 5s. at sixty-five. Five shillings under a non-contributory scheme would be a fair thing if accompanied by a contribution which would make the old-age of the people comfortable. He objected strongly to this Resolution on the ground that it had not been fully considered. It seemed to him that to fix the age at seventy was not decent. There were in many parts of the country few working men of that age who were not already in the workhouse, and the right hon. Gentleman's scheme should not be accompanied by such restrictions as to bring it about that these decent old people could have no part of the pension. Why should they be disqualified? It was not because it was right that they should be excluded, but because this precious scheme in order that it might work required that they should be excluded. Why did not the right hon. Gentleman either wait till he had got the money necessary for old-age pensions or boldly provide it now? He ought to do one or the other.

*THE CHAIRMAN pointed out to the hon. Gentleman that he was indulging in great repetition.

*MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD apologised for having been betrayed into repetition, but pointed out that in order to facilitate the passing of an old-age pension scheme hon. Members had stood aside on former occasions, and that now when the Government had elected to take this Resolution after Eleven o'clock they were entitled to have their say, and give their opinion. He was quite prepared to go into all the details, but would only say that if the Government now would put aside £500,000 a year additional——

*THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member is again repeating himself.

*MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said he was not conscious that he had referred to that part of the subject before. All he desired to say was that if the Government would put aside something to add to the money they already proposed to give so as to enable these different anomalies to which he had referred to be removed, and enable the incomes to be made up to a sum not exceeding 15s., instead of the hard and fast 10s., with a maximum of 5s., there would not be the gross injustice which arose between the person who had 9s. 11d. and another who had 10s. 1d. Moreover, the restriction should be removed as to married couples receiving less. It would not cost much more.

Resolution agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Burns, and Mr. Attorney-General.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS BILL.

"To provide for Old Age Pensions," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 254.]

PUBLIC OFFICES SITES (EXTENSION) [EXPENSES].

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [27th May], "That this House doth agree with the Committee in the Resolution, 'That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys provided by Parliament, of any Expenses, so far as not otherwise provided for, incurred by the Commissioners of Works under any Act of the present Session, to provide for the Acquisition of Land for the extension of certain Public Offices in Westminster and of the Patent Office, and for certain other public purposes.' "—(*Mr. Harcourt.*)

Question again proposed.

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD said that this Resolution was to commit the country to the payment of a very large sum of money indeed for another of those palatial establishments in which the servants in the different public Departments were to be housed. He was not aware, when this matter was brought before the Committee on a former occasion, that the scheme was one which had been approved of some years ago, and that the idea was to acquire a very large piece of land between the last new building at the corner of Parliament Street and Great George Street and Delahay Street, the last-named of which streets was to be shut up. In his opinion sufficient explanation had not been given as to precisely how much of the land had already been acquired, or how much money was intended to be got by this particular Vote. He understood that a considerable portion of the property still to be acquired consisted of the excellent and magnificent building of the Institute of Civil Engineers, which had only been erected twelve or thirteen years, but which was to be taken down simply because it was desired to have a uniform set of buildings for the public Departments. He protested on behalf of the taxpayers of the country against the expenditure of £600,000 for that site and for the buildings to be put upon it, when another site might have been procured within two or three hundreds yards, next to the building occupied by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, at a tenth of the cost. Even if this scheme had originated with the late Government he did not see why it was less objectionable that it should be carried out by the present Government with all their professions of retrenchment, economy, and reform. The present Government should have had the courage immediately to alter the scheme, and not to come before the House in a session like the present, when there were so many demands on the public purse, asking for this enormously expensive scheme. It was for these reasons that he ventured to protest most strongly against this Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

And, it being after half-past Eleven of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to the Standing Order.

Adjourned at twenty minutes before Twelve o'clock.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 29th May, 1908.

The House met at Twelve noon of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

Hull and Barnsley Railway Bill—Lords Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Read the third time, and passed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 10) Bill—"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Bethesda, Monmouth, and the Aspatria Silloth and District Joint Water Board District," presented by Mr. Masterman. Read the first time. To be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 255.]

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Cranbrook; Norwich (three); and Putney; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Eastwood, for alteration; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petition from Rochester, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petition from Coln St. Aldwyns, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions for alteration: From Cranbrook; Hawkhurst; Hyde; Norwich (three); Penrith; and Putney; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Appleby; Ashford; Borthygest; Broadway; Canisbay; Carlisle; Cefn Coed; Everton; Kirkby Thore; Rainham; Rodley; Selly Oak; South Lambeth; Troedyrhiw; Warrington; and York (two); to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Dundee; and Kirkintilloch; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND), 1907–8 (AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS).

Copy presented, of Report and Tables relating to Irish Agricultural Labourers for the year 1907–8 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

Copy presented, of Fifty-first Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, 1907–8 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Horsham Postmen and Sunday Telephone Duties.

EARL WINTERTON (Sussex, Horsham): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that postmen at Horsham have been asked quite recently to perform telephone duties on Sundays at a uniform rate of 6d. per hour; whether this duty is proper to the class of telegraphists who have refused the offer of the department to accept considerably less than the regulation pay for Sunday work; and whether he will explain the reason for asking the postmen to undersell their colleagues of the telegraph department.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am making inquiries into the matter.

Regulation of Friendly Societies.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a Select Committee in 1889 reported that the Friendly Societies Act requires amendment, extension, and strengthening; whether he can state what legislation has since been passed in that direction; and whether he can say to how many of the thirty-three recommendations of that Select Committee effect has meanwhile been given.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The answer to the first part of the Question is in the affirmative. The following are the Acts passed since 1889 dealing with friendly societies:—

52 and 53 Vic., c. 22.
56 and 57 Vic., c. 30.
58 and 59 Vic., c. 26.
59 and 60 Vic., c. 25.}
59 and 60 Vic., c. 26.}

In 1891 a Bill was introduced to amend the Law relating to Industrial Assurance; it was ordered to be referred to the Standing Committee on Trade, before which it was in part discussed. It was finally withdrawn in June of that year, being of a controversial nature the state of public business did not allow its being proceeded with. In pursuance of the recommendations of the Select Committee a Bill was brought in and passed in 1896 incorporating all such provisions of the Friendly Societies Act, 1875, as were exclusively applicable to collecting societies and industrial assurance companies. Other of the recommendations being of a codifying nature were already contained in the existing Acts, and the remainder have not been given effect to. The hon. Member will find the recommendations of the Select Committee very fully dealt with in the Annual Report of the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies for 1890.

Sunday Delivery of Telegrams at Chester.

MR. MOND (Chester): To ask the Postmaster-General whether he can state why at the Upton Heath Post Office, Chester, no telegrams are delivered after 10 a.m. on Sundays, which is only 1½ miles from Chester General Post Office, whereas telegrams are delivered from Chester General Post Office to Mickle Trafford on Sundays, which is three miles distant; and whether, in view of the fact that Upton is a growing residential centre, he can see his way to afford greater facilities for the delivery of telegrams on Sundays.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I will make inquiry and communicate with the hon. Member.

Irish Railway Disputes.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask Mr. Attorney-General for Ireland whether his attention has been directed to Rule 65 of the Rules (1889) of the Railway and Canal Commission, whereby a purely Irish dispute must be heard in England where the respondent is domiciled or has his principal office in England; is he aware that in a dispute between the Great Northern Railway Company of Ireland and the Postmaster - General, in reference to carriage of mails in Ireland, the Postmaster-General relies on the rule and refuses to allow the dispute to be tried in Ireland, where all the witnesses reside; and will he suggest to the rule-making authority a change in the rule so that cases may be tried as far as possible where they arise in substance.

(*Answered by Mr. Cherry.*) My attention has been drawn to the rule referred to in the Question, and it undoubtedly has the effect of requiring that a purely Irish dispute with a Department of the Government should be heard in England. So far as the Question relates to the action of the Post Office in the particular case referred to I must refer the hon. Member to my right hon. friend the Postmaster-General. It would be outside my province to suggest to the Railway Commissioners that they should alter their rules, but I am sure that any representation on the subject from the Bar of Ireland would be carefully considered by them.

British and German Armoured Cruisers.

MR. J. M. MACDONALD (Falkirk Burghs): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty how many cruisers available for the capture and destruction of merchant shipping are possessed by Great Britain and by Germany respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) Germany has forty-seven cruisers of over 16-knot speed, while Great Britain has 100. It is, however, impossible to foretell how many of these will be available for commerce destruction.

Port of London Bill and London and India Docks Debenture Stocks.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): To ask the President of the

Board of Trade whether the A, B, and C Debenture Stocks of the London and India Docks are included in the securities referred to in Clause 13 (1) of the Port of London Bill as debenture stocks, the liability for which is by or under this Act transferred to the port authority; and, if they are not, will he state in what way the existing rights of the holders of these stocks are to be preserved.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) The reply to the first part of the Question is in the negative. The holders of the A, B, and C Debenture Stocks of the London and India Docks Company will receive from the port authority in substitution of their present holdings A Port Stock, which entitles them to the same rate of interest, three per cent., as they now enjoy, and their security will consist of a first charge on the port fund and on all the revenues of the port authority.

Fees for Adjustment of Weights and Measures.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the hardship which is inflicted on small tradesmen through being compelled to pay for the annual adjustment of their weights under the Weights and Measures Act; and whether he can alter the regulations so that they should only be charged when the weights are found to be inaccurate.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I think the noble Lord must be under some misapprehension, as the regulations made under the Weights and Measures Acts do not require the annual adjustment of weights. The Act of 1878 expressly provides that a weight duly stamped is a legal weight throughout the United Kingdom, unless found to be false or unjust.

Income of Scottish Secondary Schools.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state what sum of money was allocated last year under the Scottish Education Department's Minute of the 27th April, 1899, and the Education and Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1892, respectively, to secondary schools under the management of authorities other than school boards; and will he indicate how the total income of such secondary schools last year compares with each of the two previous years.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The sum of money allocated last year under the Minute of 27th April, 1899, to secondary schools under the management of authorities other than school boards was £13,300. Information as to the sum allocated to these schools, in terms of the Education and Local Taxation Account (Scotland) Act, 1892, last year is not available, the accounts of secondary education committees for 1907–8, in which such information will be given, not having yet been submitted to the Scottish Education Department. The corresponding sum for the year 1906–7 was £6,420. The total income of such secondary schools in respect of each of the last three financial or school years for which information is available was as follows:

	£
1904–5 - - -	115,854
1905–6 - - -	112,039
1906–7 - - -	113,820

These sums do not include the balances in hand of £5,204, £6,493, and £8,288, respectively, at the beginning of the years in question.

Meat Prices at Smithfield and Deptford.

MR. COOPER (Southwark, Bermondsey): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether he will state what was the average price per stone in the Metropolitan Central Meat Market of home-grown beef and mutton for the years 1890, 1895, 1900, 1905, and 1907; and the average price per stone of beef and mutton killed at the Deptford Foreign Cattle Market for the same years.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) No official returns giving the information desired are available prior to 1896, nor have we any information as to the price of mutton killed at the Deptford Foreign Cattle Market. The other prices asked for are as follows :—

Prices of Beef and Mutton (per stone of 8 lbs.) at the London Central Market.

Year.		English.		Deptford-killed Beef.
		Beef.	Mutton.	
		Per 8 lbs.	Per 8 lbs.	Per 8 lbs.
1896		3s. 6d. to 3s. 9d.	3s. 10d. to 4s. 4d.	2s. 11d. to 3s. 3d.
1900		3s. 10d. to 4s.	4s. 6d. to 4s. 11d.	3s. 8d. to 3s. 11d.
1905	1st quality	3s. 8d.	4s. 9d.	3s. 7d.
	2nd ,,	3s. 6d.	4s. 4d.	3s. 3d.
1907	1st ,,	3s. 9d.	5s.	3s. 9d.
	2nd ,,	3s. 7d.	4s. 6d.	3s. 6d.

The figures given for 1896 and 1900 are compiled from the prices quoted weekly in the *Meat Trades Journal;* those for 1905 and 1907 from the Board of Agriculture's Weekly Return of Market Prices.

Rebate on Sugar Duty.

MR. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what amount does he estimate would be required to admit of a rebate being granted equal to the difference between the old and new duties on stocks of duty-paid foreign refined sugar, glucose, and invert sugar, respectively, lying in public warehouses or depots on 7th May last; and what is the basis of his estimate in each case.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) It is estimated that the amount required to admit of the grant of a rebate equal to the difference between the old and new duties on stocks of sugar, on which duty has been paid at the higher rate, would be a sum approaching £200,000. The inclusion of stocks of glucose and invert sugar would of course increase this sum, and the further extension of the rebate to stocks of manufactured goods containing sugar and glucose on which the higher rate of duty had been paid, would entail a further considerable increase, bringing the amount up to a total probably not less than £300,000. The estimate is based on inquiries and calculations made by my official advisers.

Irish Evicted Tenants—Reinstatement of Jeremiah Sullivan.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is now in a position to state what steps, if any, have been taken to secure the reinstatement of Jeremiah J. Sullivan, of Glencuthane, Killorglin, an evicted tenant on the Drummond estate.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have decided that the evicted tenant in question is a proper person to be provided with a holding if one can be found for him, and they have referred the case to an inspector with the object of procuring a holding if possible.

Boycotting in Ireland.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will state the number of cases of boycotting and of persons boycotted thoughout Ireland on the 28th February, 31st March, and 30th April, 1908, distinguishing between the cases of wholly boycotting, partial boycotting, and minor boycotting.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The figures are as follows:—

Date.	Wholly boycotted.		Partially boycotted.		Total number of cases of boycotting.	Total number of persons boycotted.	Minor boycotting and attempts to boycott.	
	Number of cases.	Number of persons.	Number of cases.	Number of persons.			Number of cases.	Number of persons.
29th February, 1908 -	6	37	14	61	20	98	154	572
31st March, 1908 -	6	33	13	57	19	90	148	578
30th April, 1908 -	15	65	10	39	25	104	141	545

Volunteer Long Service Decoration.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether Volunteers who may complete the qualifying period of service for the Volunteers decoration in the Territorial Army will receive that decoration; whether cases of members of disbanded regiments or of Volunteers who feel they cannot join the Territorial Army will receive consideration though the qualifying period has not been completed; and whether service in any rank will count.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Service in the Volunteers will reckon towards the grant of the decoration to officers. The cases of those who are unable to join the Territorial Force will receive full consideration. The details are not yet finally settled.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. WINFREY (Norfolk, S.W.) in moving the Second Reading, said that this Bill was promoted by the Commons and Footpaths Preservation Society, and that it had been read a second time and passed through Committee last session. Owing to lack of time it did not get its Third Reading, but on this occasion he hoped to be more fortunate and to be able not only to obtain from the House the Second Reading of the Bill, but to have the pleasure of piloting it through all its stages. Its object was to remove an uncertainty in the law affecting an important point in connection with public rights. In order to establish the claim to a public right of way an undisputed user for a period of twenty years had to be proved before the Court. The Judge assumed that some one previous to that time had dedicated this right of way. Unfortunately, however, in the cases where land was held by tenants for life, by lunatics, or was owned by infants or mortgagees in possession, there were certain Judges who had held that, although the user to the right of way might have been proved up to twenty years or more, the fact that there was no one really owning the land who had a right of dedication prevented the assumption from being made that a dedication to the public had been granted. The result of this had been that several important rights of way had been closed, not because the user had not been proved, but because the persons before that time had no right of dedication. About fifteen years ago he was himself personally interested in a case of this kind in his own parish. Owing to a quarrel between the farmers one farmer closed a right of way used by labouring men to go to and return from their work, thereby saving a journey of two or three miles. The right of way having been closed by the farmer, the labouring men tried to assert their rights by removing the barriers. The magistrates declined to adjudicate on the case, and it was brought before the High Court. He raised a subscription to bring up some of the older men to prove that they had had during thirty or more years the undisputed right to use the footpath. The Judge was sympathetically disposed to hold that some one had dedicated the footpath to public use, but then it was shown to him that at this particular time there was a mortgagee in possession of the land. It was held that there was thus no power to dedicate the land to such a purpose, and the Judge declined assent to the claim. The right of way was, therefore, lost to the public. The object of the promoters of the Bill was to prevent these difficulties from occurring in the future. He had been told that several important footpaths had been closed owing to this legal quibble. It was not a party question, and the Bill had received the support of all the local authorities throughout the country. Its passing would certainly prevent a good deal of litigation in the future. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time.

MR. HIGHAM (Yorkshire, W.R., Sowerby) said the Bill was a very small one, and one which he did not think would give any right where no previous right existed. Everybody who had any experience of testing a right of way found the proceeding a very costly one to fight. The witnesses who had to be brought up, who were usually the oldest inhabitants of the district, were not the men who were likely to impress a jury, independently of which they were apt to be frightened by cross-examination, and very easily contradicted themselves. The Local Government Act was really the only charter of freedom we had with regard to the matter, and it did stop much of the litigation that had been going on for some time. By Clause 14 of that Act parish councils and district councils had power to refuse consent to any proposal to stop a right of way, and another clause of the Act made it the duty of these bodies to protect rights of way. But the Local Government Act left the matter exactly where it was before from this point of view. It was very easy to give away a right of way, but very difficult to prove that the right existed if the landowner contested it. The law as it at present stood made proof very costly for any man, and it must be borne in mind that it was the individual who always had to fight these cases. A Bill of this description would simplify the procedure to enable people to obtain those rights which they ought to have, rights which extended in every direction, paths across fields, paths to historic sights, and paths over mountains. With regard to the question of paths across fields, they had had in his constituency innumerable questions from county councils affecting diagonal paths across ploughed fields, which were ploughed up every year and then trampled down again, and such questions were always very difficult to settle. For all these reasons, and with the hope that the Bill would receive a favourable reception at the hands of hon. Members that day, he begged to second the Motion for the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Winfrey.*)

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said that this Bill perpetuated a vicious habit which was growing in the House of Commons. If any person was defeated in the law Courts he came to this House and said the law was wrong, and asked them to alter it in his favour. That sort of thing had occurred over and over again, the greatest instance of it being the Trade Disputes Act. It seemed to be becoming a common practice for any person or association who was beaten in the law Courts to come to this House and say that the decision was opposed to what the House intended when it passed that law, and to ask that it be altered. If the decision in the case referred to by the hon. Member opposite had been in favour of the right of way, the hon. Member's Bill would never have been heard of. The statement of the case by the hon. Member opposite gave away the whole reason for the Bill. A person who had bought land and paid money for it had a right to be consulted as to these alleged rights of way when it was borne in mind that the public never paid anything for them. Supposing a landowner was a lunatic or had borrowed money on the land and the land was not therefore in his possession at the moment, he surely ought to be prevented from giving a right of way to the public for which they paid not a farthing. Where the right was obtained by encroachment he did not see why the person who had purchased the property in question should be injured because people, in many cases out of malice, had a desire to walk across his fields. So far as his experience went no landowner in the country desired to close a right of way so long as it was used and exercised in a proper manner. There might be isolated instances of men closing a right of way but the number was small. He contended that Parliament must not legislate for a portion of the community, but for the whole. They must not take a few landowners and say that because they did not behave properly the whole landlord class must suffer. A few Fridays ago the question before the House was the Access to Mountains Bill, and the argument in favour of that Bill was that it was necessary for the health of the people, and in order to make them good citizens and improve their minds, that they should be able to stroll over the mountains. That argument had not been adduced on this occasion, and could not be, because in the country districts of England nobody, except in hay time or harvest, was prevented if he were well behaved from walking across the fields. Because a few footpaths for the moment were shut up that could not be said to prevent the public from being healthy and improving their minds. If this Bill passed into law it might do considerable damage to property. He knew it was unpopular at this time to speak in defence of property, but so long as he lived he hoped he would never fail to have the courage to defend those rights which persons, through hard work either on their own part or on the part of their fathers, had obtained. Let the House take the position of a lunatic in possession of a beautiful property in the country. Lunatics were notoriously long lived. A lunatic might not be sufficiently mad to be confined in an asylum but he might be absolutely incapable of managing his affairs. He might think he was conferring a benefit on mankind by allowing the people to walk past his front door. Let them suppose that that went on for twenty years; that the property was entailed; and that at the end of that time it fell into the possession of the heir at law. That gentleman owing to the death duties was not able to afford to live on the property and he endeavoured to sell it. Immediately there was a great depreciation in the property owing to this right of way set up by the lunatic predecessor whose action no one was able to control. That was one instance where damage might arise from the residential point of view. But there were other reasons why damage might be done. Land did not grow, but population did. The population was increasing, towns were increasing, and it might be that upon property close to a town a right of way might be allowed to spring up. Then the property was required for building purposes: immediately a question of the right of way arose, and again there was a depreciation of the value of the property to the owner. He could not for himself see that any argument could be brought to bear in favour of the Bill, except the sentimental argument that people who had been in the habit of walking across a field ought not to be stopped. A great number of people would receive benefit by the land being built upon, and the value of the property would be increased, and the more money we had in the country the better he thought it would be for the country. The question would also affect land in the towns. The Bill said that—

> "Where any way upon or over any land or water has been actually engaged by the public without interruption, etc."

and it went on to say—

> "Unless there was no person in possession of such land or water capable of dedicating such at any time during such period of twenty years."

He maintained that those words were very vague and that they would lead to considerable uncertainty. The hon. Member who brought in the Bill talked about the uncertainty of the law, and said he was desirous of remedying it. He believed the law was always uncertain, and that no Act of Parliament would ever make it otherwise; the very object of the lawyers as far as he knew, was to make it uncertain, for if it was always certain there would never be any litigation. But it seemed to him that the words he had quoted would make the law still more uncertain and would cause a very grave injustice to certain people. They all knew that town property was let on various terms of lease. It might be possible that the owner of certain houses in a street, or of certain stables in a mews, might have let houses or stables for, say, seven years. The lease might have terminated then, and the owner might have been in possession for a fortnight or so; the lease might be renewed to the other people, and so the period of twenty years might be covered. The people to whom the house or stable were let might have, without the knowledge of the owner, allowed a right of way to spring up either in the mews or in the street, and the result of this Bill, he thought, would be that it would be held that that particular owner, being in possession for a fortnight between the two lettings, would be held to have complied with the provisions of the Act, *i.e.*, he was capable of dedicating it "at any time" during those twenty years. Those words "at any time" would cover the fortnight, and serious injury might be done to town property by preventing alterations and building extensions, because the owner, without knowledge that his tenants were doing something that they ought not to have done, happened to have been in possession for a fortnight. He thought that was a very serious thing, and he did not see how it was to be got over. The name of his noble and learned friend the Member for Marylebone was on this Bill, if he was not very much mistaken, last year, but it had now mysteriously disappeared. He had a great regard for his noble and learned friend and for his legal opinion, and he was in hopes that, having seen the error of his ways last year, he had now quietly removed his name from the back of the Bill, because he was much affected last year when he saw his noble friend's name to a Bill of that character. He thought the second case he had given was a strong reason for not allowing the Bill to pass. The wording of the Bill was extremely vague. It said in Clause 2—

> "Where any way, etc., shall be deemed to have been dedicated as a public highway."

But there was no definition of a public highway. What did it mean? Supposing there was a footpath across a field, was that to become a public highway? Under the Bill he was quite certain that any number of learned gentlemen in that House would not be averse from arguing in any Court of law that a public highway under the Bill meant a highway over which one could walk, drive, motor, or ride, and he believed that they could show precedents for it. He wanted to know whether, supposing there was a footpath, that footpath could be turned into a bridle path, or a carriage track, or a motor track. It seemed to him that the Bill was extremely vague and uncertain, and that it defeated the purpose of the hon. Member who introduced it, who had not foreseen how far his action would take him. He had been actuated no doubt by the spirit which actuated most Englishmen; when they had been beaten they did not like it. Having been beaten in a Court of law, the hon. Member was now trying to come out on top, but he would point out to him that the Bill did very little good to the public. There was plenty of opportunities for them to enjoy rights of way. In many cases the owners of parks very kindly placed them at the disposal of the public, whether there was a right of way or not, so long as they behaved themselves. The advantage of having the right of interdiction was evident, because unfortunately there was a certain number of trippers and people who misbehaved themselves. A friend of his who always had his park open told him that he planted a young plantation, and after it had been growing for four years the trippers pulled up the young trees for walking sticks. If they passed a Bill of this kind and gave the public rights for which they had paid nothing, they took away the power from the owner of seeing that the privilege which he gave was used in a proper manner. Then, again, many people who availed themselves of those privileges did not like to see everything destroyed with paper and glass bottles left all over the place, and those people were protected by the fact that at present the owner had some right to say how people should use his property. He thought he had shown strong reasons why this Bill, which on the face of it was rather an innocent one, should be rejected. His experience was that the smaller and more innocent a Bill was, the more dangerous it would be to pass it. These little innocent Bills introduced on Friday afternoons were recommended on the ground of good-fellowship and all that kind of thing, but were generally extremely dangerous. Therefore, he had much pleasure in moving that this Bill should be read a second time upon that day six months.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.) in seconding the rejection of the Bill, asked for some further explanation as to whether it would not defeat the object for which it was intended. It appeared to him that whilst the Bill aimed at bringing into regular form paths that had been defined as rights of way, it might have the effect of making landowners all over the country draw in their horns with regard to little privileges they might have allowed. This question of rights of way was much better left to the natural growth of little privileges and the elastic conditions which land owners might from time to time allow with regard to their property, and it appealed, to him very strongly that if they brought all the landowners in the country face to face with the problem whether they were to allow small privileges, such as cutting across the corner of a plantation or removing a stone wall, in order to accommodate the neighbours, a very natural privilege would be taken away by the Bill, because the owner of the property would say that that gracious and natural privilege would be turned into a public highway. If the highway was to include all the hon. Baronet below him had stated, it would be a very great damage to the property. If this question were left in the way proposed by the Bill, he took it that every landowner in the country, to whatever party he belonged, would be always in dread of any of the little privileges he had allowed, such as the use of a stile at the corner of a plantation as a short way from point to point, being turned into public highways, and he would be compelled for the protection of his property to withdraw those privileges, which would be a great loss to the whole country. Hon. Members acquainted with the rural places of England, and especially Scotland, would know that there were rights of way granted exactly in the manner he had described, and it would be a cruel thing, because of this Bill, to make it obligatory to close them up to prevent their being converted into public highways. He took it that the real meaning of the Bill was that its promoters were desirous of closing up all those roads which were not statutory rights of way. He thought the House should pause before it permitted the Bill to have a Second Reading. If the measure conferred privileges upon the public instead of taking them away, then there might be something to be said in favour of its Second Reading. But as it was, if the landowners, who had the final word, saw that this Bill passed the Second Reading, though it never got any further, a certain unrest would undoubtedly creep in among them, the natural outcome of which would be that, instead of allowing people to cross a stubble field in winter, or an old plantation, or something of that sort, they would take special precautions that would probably mean the railing off of places hitherto used, and the putting up of walls in other parts. They would say: "At all events we must not allow people to cross our land as they have been doing for the last nineteen years, because if they do it one year more the hon. Member with his Bill will come in and turn our property into a highway for all classes of vehicles." If they looked at Clause 2 of the Bill they would see that it used the words—

> "Enjoyed by the public without interruption for a period of twenty years."

He hoped some hon. Member learned in the law would explain exactly what the meaning of "public" was. Did it mean one's own workmen? A workman might have been allowed by his employer for nineteen years to use a particular way to and from his work. That workman might at the end of that period become the employee of a neighbour, and if he had a spite against his former employer, he might seek to use the old way to and from his work for another year in order to get it converted into a macadamised road. He was glad to see the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General present, besides other hon. and learned Members, for he would like to know how this Bill would affect rights of way in Ireland. Rights of way by water and by road in that country were somewhat different from what they were in other parts of the Kingdom. Indeed, as he was reminded by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, this difference as to rights of way in different parts of the country was another point against the Bill, which would bring all those rights to the same level. He would like to have it made clear what the Bill really meant in this respect, because Clause 2 undoubtedly made it difficult to see what the effect of the measure would be. A great difference would be made in respect of some of the waterway rights in Ireland, which differed from those in England and Scotland. In Ireland there were stepping stones over private streams, and rustic bridges put up by the landowner for the use of the people, and these were to be found in the beautiful glens of both the North and South of Ireland. The stepping stones, or the punt which could be shoved from side to side of the river or stream, would have to be taken away, and the inhabitants compelled to go four or five miles to get across by a bridge. The rustic bridges would disappear, and these beautiful glens, so attractive to tourists, would probably have an unsightly barge to be used as a ferry, or some unpicturesque structure, in place of the rustic bridge, to form the public highway. Clearly the promoters of the Bill had forgotten the effect their proposals would have upon the beautiful scenery in the glens of Ireland, most of which were private property, and the attractions of which brought great numbers of tourists and large sums of money into these districts. The tourists who stayed in these beautiful neighbourhoods bought their eggs, butter, and bacon of the cottagers, and in that way money was brought into the country. He dared say that the promoters of the Bill had never been in Ireland, and did not know what its effect would be. Under this Bill the famous bridge of Carrick-a-Rede, situate in one of the most lovely parts of Ireland, would immediately become a public highway, and would in that case, no doubt, have to be taken down. It was much resorted to by tourists, and, like many other beautiful parts of Ireland, its attractions were of great material advantage to the people in the district. The Bill would take away many ancient privileges, substitute for them a hard and fast rule, set the local inhabitants against the landed proprietors, and afford them no privileges to compensate for the loss of those they had enjoyed. It remained for the promoters of the measure to show what benefits it would confer.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Sir F. Banbury.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe) said the hon. Member who had moved the rejection of the Bill had a very exaggerated notion as to what it was going to effect. It was a very small but a very useful Bill. It was not intended to alter rights at all, but simply to alter procedure, and to give legislative sanction to, and define, what had been the practice, according to the best judicial opinion, with regard to the effect to be given to evidence in cases of this kind. It would be of great advantage to the public, both those who wished to maintain rights of way, and those who wished to stop them, because it would define the issue which had to be tried very much more clearly, and in that way it would greatly reduce the difficulty and the cost of fighting actions of this kind. Anyone who had had any experience in right of way cases knew that they were almost always very long and very expensive cases, because of the extreme difficulty and uncertainty of the points to which the evidence had to be directed. The effect of this would be to define in a way which would enable parties to a case of this sort to know precisely the points to which they might direct their evidence, and in that way it would very largely decrease the cost of fighting cases of this kind. There was, however, a great deal in what had been said by both hon. Members who had opposed the Bill as to the fear that it would make landowners necessarily more careful about allowing the public to go on their property. But he wished to suggest to landowners a way in which that could be avoided, and which would enable them to continue to give the public access to their property without losing control of it. There was a very sensible notice put up by Lord Carrington, who was a large landowner in Buckinghamshire, that there was no right of way, but the public were invited to use the paths until further notice. In that way, without losing any of his own rights, he gave the public perfect freedom to wander in places where he was willing that they should do it, without acquiring any right which would interfere with his subsequent sale or dealing with the property. If landowners put up similar notices they would prevent any evidence of dedication arising, and it would not be necessary to curtail the rights of the public. There was one respect in which the Bill did not appear to agree with the Memorandum which had been issued in respect of it. The Memorandum said the object of the Bill was to provide that—

> "Where the way had been used without interruption for twenty years, and the owner of the land during that time had been under no disability, the right of the public shall be deemed to be established, but where during that time the owner is under disability the period will be forty years."

What they understood from that was that, supposing there had been a user for twenty years, during any of that time, not the whole of it, there had been someone in possession of the land who was under disability and not capable of making a dedication, then the twenty years would not count and they would have to have a forty years user, which would clearly enable someone not under disability to have a long time in possession of the property and prevent the public user maturing into a right. But probably, by a misapprehension, the Bill said exactly the opposite. The Bill said—

> "Unless there was no person in possession of such land or water capable of dedicating such way at any time during such period of twenty years."

Therefore if at any time during the twenty years there was any person in possession not under disability the right would be acquired. If the words were transposed so as to read "unless at any time during such period of twenty years there was no person in possession of such land," it would carry out what he held to be the intention of the promoters. But as it stood, supposing there had been a user, it would only exclude the acquisition of a right by the public where an infant came into possession of the land before he was one year of age. If he came into possession at the age of two, or three, the public right would be obtained. He had no doubt the promoters would be prepared to make an alteration in that sense. Hon. Members had been very much frightened by the use of the word "highway" and had pictured a quiet little path across a field after twenty years user suddenly becoming turned into a road on which motor and traction engines would be allowed to go. But the right which would be gained was only such a right as the user justified, for if the path had been used as a footpath it would only be a highway as a footpath, if used for riding it would be a bridle path, and if it had been used for driving it would be a highway for driving only. But the mere fact of its user as a footpath would not make it into a motor path; and the instances given by Members opposite really did not arise under the Bill.

MR. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said he had listened very attentively to the remarks of Members in support of the Bill, and he was unable to see that any case had been made out for an alteration in the law as it existed. The result of the Bill if passed would be to restrict rather than enlarge the rights of the public. He desired to refer to the effect of the Bill with respect to cities rather than rural districts, and held that to enact that after the use of a pathway for twenty years it should become a public highway would be extremely dangerous and destructive of what he took to be the doctrine of limited user. He understood that where a pathway had been used for private or for special purposes any rights acquired by the public were subservient to the private rights or special use which had previously existed. To apply that to the case of a seaport—let them take the case of a sea wall or pier under the control of Commissioners for certain specific purposes. Supposing that for a great number of years the public had been allowed the use of that sea wall or pier, was that to be constituted a right, and was it to be taken from the control of those to whom it belonged? There was the landing stage at Liverpool, which was used as a public promenade, but was there for the purposes of navigation. Was the fact that it had been used as a public promenade for thirty or forty years to detract from the right of the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board? Then again this applied to water as well as land, and conveyed rights of navigation. Supposing the use of a dock had been allowed for twenty years or more. Were the public to have an absolute right, even though the Docks and Harbour Board conceived it desirable for the purposes of navigation that they should be excluded? There was also the case of railway stations. He knew of a case where the general public were now in the habit of going right through a station, not for the purpose of taking trains, but simply because it was a short cut to their places of business. Was the railway company to be compelled to allow the public the use of that station possibly to the detriment of the use for which the station was intended? These cases showed how very impossible the Bill was in its present form. There might be grievances. The mover of the Bill had referred to one, but he could not see how it was met by the Bill. The case he had cited was that of a pathway across a field which had been used by working people for more than twenty years, and then the owner of the property closed it. The case was tried to establish the right of the public, but it failed because at the time when the use began there was nobody who could have dedicated it to the use of the public. But this Bill excepted that very case—

> "Unless there was no person in possession of such land or water capable of dedicating such way at any time during such period of twenty-years."

Mr. HERBERT said it would then have to be proved that it had been used for forty years.

Mr. McARTHUR said he thought the case cited was where it had been used for twenty years. His point was that the particular grievance would not be remedied. He admitted that there might be cases of grievance where a path which had been enjoyed by the public was closed by the caprice of the owner, and in those cases the right of the public should be vindicated against the owners; but this Bill went very much further than that and would, if it were passed, cause so much inconvenience and danger, and so detract from the rights of the public rather than enlarge them, that he should find himself compelled to vote against the Second Reading.

Mr. HAROLD COX (Preston) said he did not profess to be a lawyer, and, therefore, should give no opinion as to the legal technicalities of the Bill; but as regarded the general principles underlying it he was strongly in favour of it and only wished it went further. He was a little surprised to find anybody on the opposite side—he hoped there would be none on the Ministerial side—championing deliberate attempts on the part of certain owners of land to appropriate public property. To him public property was just as sacred as private property, neither more nor less, and the whole difficulty arose because a good many people who were strongly impressed with the sanctity of private property, especially their own, had too little regard for the sanctity of other people's property, especially when that property was enjoyed by an indefinite number of persons. In Kent a deliberate system of annexing roadside strips to private property had been going on for a number of years. This practice had been carried on by quite respectable persons, Members of both Houses.

Sir F. BANBURY: This Bill would not touch that at all.

Mr. HAROLD COX said the Bill gave additional means of stopping the practice, inasmuch as it facilitated legal proceedings. The method adopted was gradually to trim up the brushwood at the roadside till the result was a fairly substantial hedge, behind which the landowner then put a fence, thus annexing what was a valuable amenity to the public, especially in these days when offensive smelling motor-cars made walking along the actual roadway so disagreeable to the pedestrian. Parliament ought to prevent this public injury being done. Recounting efforts of his own to protect the public interest in a case of this kind, he said that after addressing himself to the parish council and the rural district council without satisfactory result he wrote to a Minister, who suggested that he should give 5s. to a traction driver accidentally to charge into the hedge. That suggestion was made as some other Ministerial suggestions were made, without sufficient knowledge of the local circumstances. He afterwards wrote a courteous letter to the owner, who replied in an insolent letter recommending him to study a certain text in Timothy, which bade him mind his own business. He responded by referring the owner to another Biblical text: "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmarks." There the correspondence ended. That was a case of deliberate robbery by a private person who was stealing public property, and the House ought to devise some means of stopping it. He suggested that this power should be put into the hands of the Board of Agriculture, because there were many disadvantages in leaving it in the hands of the local authority. Local authorities, consisting as they often did of tradesmen who wished to avoid quarrelling with the local landowner, could not be relied upon to protect the public interest in these matters. There were a great many landowners who would often extend facilities to the public were it not that so many members of the public had no conception how to behave in dealing with country things, and at present the landowner had no remedy except by prosecution for damage, and that was not sufficient. Besides, that put a great financial burden upon the landlord for protecting the amenities of the public which he ought not to be called upon to bear. He suggested that it should be made a criminal offence to do damage to plant life, and that the cost of prosecution should be met from public sources. If that were done they would find landlords less reluctant to extend privileges to the public, and he hoped they would find also less desire on the part of the landlords to appropriate public property.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) said he found himself in accord with the hon. Member for Preston upon this question, but from very different reasons. In regard to the case the hon. Member had mentioned his only regret was that the matter ended there and that no litigation had arisen out of it. He supported the Second Reading of this Bill and he might state that he did not share the fears of the hon. Member as to the amount of litigation it might introduce. The law applying to highways was rather anomalous, and it was different from that under which they acquired private rights of way over their neighbour's property. As far as public highways were concerned public rights could only be acquired by the dedication of that highway to the public by the owner, and that was purely a question of evidence. The simplest way would be to put up a notice: "This is a public highway." The evidence of a user of the highway for a year or two years in some cases might be sufficient to justify a tribunal in deciding that the owner intended to dedicate the highway to the public. When they came to consider the legal periods necessary to justify a right of way there was an old diction of the law that if they found the public had used the highway for a considerable period of time the law presumed that the owner must have intended to dedicate that highway to the public or else he would never have allowed the public to use it in that way for so long a time. He wished to add this caveat, that the owner could always prevent that right being established by stopping up the highway for any one day in the year. In the case of all the colleges at Cambridge and in the Temple in London and other places, they found that on a certain day in the year the gates were shut, and no one was allowed to go through unless they asked permission. That practice would not be altered by this Bill. If there had been no owner in existence for a considerable period with power to dedicate—in cases of land in settlement, for instance—difficulty arose, and he agreed with the part of the Bill dealing with this matter. Some points in the measure, however, would require amendment in Committee. One was in regard to its application to Scotland and Ireland. He had a great admiration for Scottish law, but he would leave that question as it was affected by this Bill to his hon. friends representing Scotland. With regard to its application to Ireland he approached that with greater terror, and he would be glad to hear what the state of the law was in that country. As far as England was concerned he presumed the promoter of this measure did not intend it to apply to a case where a landlord had let land upon a building lease for sixty years, as occurred in so many cases in London, and where the tenant might be tempted to grant a right of way to the public. There would be the ground landlord, and everybody knew that at present under such circumstances a right of way could not be acquired. If the landlord and tenant fell out the tenant in this respect would have a tremendous power against the landlord. Supposing the public had been allowed to use that land for thirty or forty years the landlord would have no power to stop the user and the tenant being hostile to the landlord might let the public in. That power would be given to the tenant in possession of the land, and he did not think the Bill intended to confer that power upon the tenant. The Bill was intended to apply to all questions relating to the assertion of rights of way. If they made it easier for the public to obtain rights of way, they would be very likely to make landlords more active in looking after their own rights. Reference had been made to the practice of railway companies allowing the public to use short cuts, but while that was so, he thought it would be found that the companies were careful to take some means to preserve the rights they possessed in connection with roads and pathways. He did not know the facts in regard to the Liverpool landing stage, but he had not the slightest doubt that the boards which had control of such places were carefully advised as to the means which they should take to protect their rights. The Bill would not affect the Liverpool landing stage in any shape or form. The measure would introduce a very great and useful change in the law, but it would be necessary in Committee to make some modifications in the provisions in order that the intentions of the promoters might be carried out without infringing rights of which landowners should not be deprived.

*Mr DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire) said it seemed to him that the Bill would constitute an important step in securing public rights of way. They should do all they could to maintain those public rights. The rights were increasing in value every day, because under modern conditions people wanted more and more access to country districts, fresh air, and fields. He might be allowed to say that in the application of the Bill to Scotland there would have to be very considerable alterations made, and probably a new clause would be required. The principal difficulties which had arisen in England in relation to rights of way were due to the peculiar state of the law in this country. There was in England behind a right of way the presumption of dedication, and consequently any claim to a right of way might be challenged on the ground that there could have been no dedication at some particular time. He was glad to say that in Scotland they were quite free from that. The late Lord Watson, one of the highest authorities on Scots law, in Mann's case in 1885 said—

> "According to the law of Scotland, the constitution of a public road does not depend upon any legal fiction, but upon the fact of use by the public as matter of right, continuously and without interruption for the full period of long prescription. I am aware that there are *dicta* to be found in which the prescriptive acquisition of a right of way by the public is attributed to implied grant, acquiescence of the owner, and so forth, but these appear to me to be mere speculations as to the origin of the rule."

Taking that to be the law in Scotland, the effect of the Bill as regards Scotland would seem to be to shorten the period of prescription to twenty years. He knew that various difficulties might arise from the phraseology of the Bill, and that showed the necessity for making special provision with regard to Scotland. A right of way in Scotland did not depend on conveyance or dedication, but simply on the answer to the question: "Have the public or have they not exercised uninterrupted user as of right of the right of way for a certain period?" It would be a very great improvement if the Bill could be extended in some way so as to apply to England that general principle, so as to get free from the difficulties as to dedication which so often made the attempt to assert public rights nugatory. The uninterrupted use as of right of a right of way for a certain time should be considered as establishing a right to be enjoyed by the public for ever afterwards.

Mr. LAMBTON (Durham, S.E.) called attention to the fact that neither the

Lord-Advocate nor the Solicitor-General for Scotland was present, though the Bill under discussion contemplated the making of serious alterations in the law of both England and Scotland. The hon. Member for Dumbartonshire had pointed out that the law of Scotland was entirely different from that of England in regard to rights of way. He hoped the Law Officers of the Crown would state whether his hon. friend was correct in his explanation of the measure. If he was correct he would not oppose it. The hon. Member for Preston had made some extraordinary remarks in regard to what had been done in Kent. If landlords were allowed to take away highways from the public in that county, he could state that he had never heard of its being done in the north of England. What had been said by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London in regard to disabilities placed in the way of the public deserved some consideration. There were a great many landowners who did not impose restrictions to prevent people walking from one place to another, but if a public right of way were to be set up by twenty years use of the way, landowners might be led to consider whether they should continue their present practice. If the hon. Member in charge of the Bill would in Committee formulate or accept Amendments providing the necessary safeguards, he would not oppose the measure.

Mr. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said he did not share the apprehensions of some of his hon. friends on that side of the House. He thought great advantage would result from legislation which would have the effect of making landowners more active in asserting their rights. If a landlord who thought he had a certain right made it clear that he really possessed it, much friction would be done away with. What was proposed by this Bill would make the question of proof much easier. He agreed with the hon. Member for Dumbartonshire that the Bill as it stood could not be applied to Scotland. Under English law he understood that the right of the public to the use of a highway could only be acquired by dedication to the public by the owner of the highway. The first clause of the Bill would alter the conditions under which the dedication took place. In Scotland there was no such thing as dedication, and therefore Clause 1, the only operative clause in the Bill, was meaningless so far as the law of Scotland was concerned. In Scotland the conditions necessary to the acquisition of a public right of way were very simple. It had only to be proved that the way had been used without interruption by the public to go from one public place to another as a matter of right for the prescriptive period of forty years. If this Bill was to be proceeded with—and he hoped it would be—he would suggest to the hon. Member in charge of it that he should see that some Amendment or clause was introduced to make the position of Scotland in this matter clear and definite. If the prescriptive period in Scotland was to be reduced from forty to twenty years, well and good, but that was not in the Bill at present. He thought a very strong case could be made out for that. In the Conveyancing Act of 1874 it was laid down that a private right could not be acquired in a period under twenty years. If the hon. Gentleman were to take the opinion of the Law Officers for Scotland, he would find that the Bill as drawn was entirely inapplicable to Scotland.

*Mr. BYLES (Salford, N.) said he had listened with interest to the exposition of the land laws given by the hon. Gentleman opposite, and was glad to know that that hon. Gentleman was in sympathy with the main object of the Bill. That explanation only showed how very few rights the public had in the land and how very difficult it was to acquire them. There was a story of a trespasser who was wandering over some place when the landlord met him and asked: "What are you doing here? Do you know that this is my land?" The reply was: "I must be on somebody's land, I have none of my own." That was the case with most of them. It had, he believed, been laid down by Sir Frederick Pollock that the public had no right to be anywhere except on land which was dedicated to the public, or on the public highway, and there the public had to move on, or on the seashore between high and low water mark. Therefore, he was entirely in sympathy with any effort of this kind to extend the rights of the public to go over the land in which they lived. An hon. Member had told them of a very interesting notice which Lord Carrington had put up somewhere on his estate telling the public that they had no right of way there, but that he was perfectly willing that they should go there. That reminded him of a famous Judge who put up a board bearing the legend: "Trespassers will *not* be prosecuted." If there were more landlords of that kind there would not be as much agitation as at present for the acquisition of public rights of way. At the same time existing rights of way should be watched and guarded and care taken to check the invasion of public rights by private individuals. Everyone knew that that was being done by associations such as the Commons Preservation Society. It was because he believed that this Bill would tend to increase public rights of way and prevent the infringement of these rights by private owners, that he supported it. He was once concerned in an affair which cost him a good deal, and taught him how few public rights of way there were. There was a long stretch of moorland covered with heather between Airedale and Wharfdale with paths all over it, and a local Commons Preservation Society, with which he was connected, believed that the public had rights over this common land. At any rate they thought they had a right to roam over it. There was a demonstration, and litigation ensued which he was sorry to say resulted in the loss to him of a sum which ran into three figures. He learned his lesson, and it was because he had learned his lesson that he was in favour of any legislation which would secure to the public a right to go over the land on which they were born. No doubt the Second Reading of the Bill would be carried by a large majority, but what he asked was: Is the public likely to acquire this new right demanded in the Bill? In fact would this Bill result in anything? They had discussed for a whole Friday the Access to Mountains Bill; but did anybody think they would have a right of access to mountains before this session ended? It was so with many other Bills of that kind. He was coming fast to the conclusion that a good deal of the work of this Parliament was futile. There was something wrong in the State of Denmark by which they could not get what they wanted. The King had called this Parliament together that they might legislate in the manner and in the direction which the people desired. The people desired this Bill, to judge from the support which it received. And judged by their votes the people desired many other things, but they could not get them. Yet the previous night they had spent hours marking time. He thought that the attention of the Government should be directed seriously to the procedure of the House, so that it might be possible that Bills which the House and the country desired and which had been voted for by large majorities should be really passed.

SIR F. BANBURY: May I point out that it was the Government which wasted the time of the House last night.

*MR. BYLES said he attached no blame to the hon. Baronet, and, therefore, he did not think that he had any cause to interrupt him. He hoped that some means would be found by which Bills which the people wanted and for which the representatives of the people voted by enormous majorities and which passed their Second Reading often without a division, should become Acts of Parliament. He supported the Second Reading of this Bill.

MR. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs) said he had had considerable experience in dealing with rights of way inquiries, and he had presided over two in his own county. This Bill proposed to make a greater change in the law of Scotland than some hon. Members imagined. He did not agree with the hon. Member opposite that the prescriptive period by which rights of way could be acquired in Scotland would be altered by the Bill. At the present time a path had to be used for a period of forty years before a right of way was created. But there was a very important provision—not perhaps of the common law—but as the result of a long string of legal decisions, that no right of way could possibly exist or be conferred unless the path started from one public place and ended in another public place. That was to say that there could be no right of way to a *cul de sac*, no matter how long the public had used that path. What he wanted to know was whether this Bill would get rid of or entirely revoke those legal decisions which had in some cases protected the rights of the public and in other cases had gone contrary to the interests of the public. He himself had presided over a very long and bitter inquiry, and as a result of the evidence then given witnesses had been cutting one another's acquaintance ever since. Undoubtedly, in that case the path had been commonly used by the public for over sixty years, but owing to the fact that it could not be proved that the path ended in a place of public resort, the claim to the right of way had to be refused. He imagined that this Bill went further than was supposed, and he thought that it was very inconvenient that they had not the Law Officers for Scotland present to advise the House on the point. These gentlemen were paid large salaries and they ought to attend to their duties and perform them. The only Law Officer in his place was the Solicitor-General for England. Did or did not that hon. and learned Gentleman know whether this Bill interfered with the legal decisions in Scotland to which he had referred?

*THE SOLICITOR-GENERAL (Sir S. EVANS, Glamorganshire, Mid.): No, I have no special knowledge of the law of Scotland.

MR. YOUNGER said he had only asked the hon. and learned Gentleman the question for the purpose of making his point clear that there ought to be some one in the House to explain the law of Scotland. Unfortunately the hon. and learned Member for South Edinburgh who was capable of affording the information was also absent. He did not object to the Bill at all, and would support the Second Reading. He did not take the extreme views expressed by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, but he thought that they ought to vote for the Bill only on the distinct understanding that questions such as he had referred to should be carefully dealt with in Committee.

VISCOUNT CASTLEREAGH (Maidstone) said it was a very curious thing that when an hon. Member representing a Scottish constituency rose to ask a point as to the law of Scotland, the legal advisers of the Crown in Scotland should have beat a hasty retreat. He did not think that there had been behind the Bill sufficient support in the House to justify them in giving it a Second Reading. Although many hon. Members had risen in their places to support the Bill most of them had guarded themselves with the qualification that they hoped it would be altered almost beyond reconition in the Committee stage. There was no doubt that this Bill was in the same category as the Access to Mountains Bill debated last Friday, the primary object of which was to give greater freedom to those who had not, under the present law, those facilities for moving about in country districts which the promoters of the Bill thought they should have. The primary object to the Bill was not to define the law. The Bill was brought forward for the benefit of isolated cases. It was a measure for penalising a great majority in order to make a small minority do that which everyone agreed they ought to do. A phrase was used by the hon. Member for the Wycombe Division of Bucks, which, in his opinion, always did a good deal of harm when used in this House. He said that the Bill

> "was a small and very useful measure."

The danger was that these Bills brought forward by hon. Members on the back benches were sometimes adopted by the Government and forced through by means of closure and the guillotine in a way that everyone deplored. He did not think that the remedy proposed by the hon. Gentleman, of putting up notice boards, was a desirable one, nor did he think it would meet the case. His own opposition to this Bill was founded upon the fact that it was a piece of entirely unnecessary legislation. The Bill seemed to be small and not very harmful, but there were many dangers which had been entirely lost sight of by its promoters. One was that those who were now willing to allow open footpaths for the purpose of benefiting large numbers of people in the country would have seriously to reconsider their position if the Bill became law. There were many men responsible for the management of properties who, unknown to their employers, had allowed people to make use of what was or might become under this Bill a right of way. Those persons would be very unwilling to prejudice their employers by allowing those rights to continue. It was admitted that the law at the present time with regard to rights of way was uncertain, but that was not an unmixed evil. He did not know if this Bill became an Act that it would make the law more certain than it was now. It was most important that the Bill should either meet with a direct negative or be withdrawn by its promoters, as it must be obvious that it had not the support behind it which would justify its being passed into law. For these reasons he would support the Motion of the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.) agreed that there was not a great deal of support behind the Bill; but this was because it was, genuinely, a small measure; and behind small measures of change a large amount of support was not always to be expected. So far from its being unnecessary, in his opinion it would be a desirable Bill to pass. It did not make much change in the law. All it did was to declare that one of the views taken by the Judges was the correct view. The opponents of the Bill were, however, entitled to say that many of the speeches delivered ostensibly in support of the Bill had nothing to do with it. It did not, for example, deal with the theft of strips of land by the wayside, though he agreed that there was a great deal to be said for making it as much a criminal offence to steal land as to steal goods. The Bill only dealt with prime rights of way, not with the general rights of the public to stray all over a common. That was because it left the law where it was as to what constituted a right of way. They would still have to prove that the right had been used for twenty years. In the same way the junior Member for the City of London had spoken of the danger which might occur owing to a lunatic being the owner of a property. If the lunatic was the full owner he could at this time dedicate a right of way across his land and destroy the whole value of the estate to his successors. If he was in full possession this Bill would not affect his position. If he was tenant for life then the proof of forty years use would be required, and it was exceedingly unlikely that a lunatic would be in possession for forty years. He thought a case had been made out by the hon. Member for the Kirkdale division of Liverpool and the hon. Baronet with regard to towns, and the promoters should consider whether they should not except boroughs and cities from the operation of the Bill, which was really mainly intended to secure the use of country footpaths. He was doubtful whether the ultimate effect of the Bill would be to increase rights of way. He thought its effect would be to diminish them. It would define more accurately than had ever been defined the rights of the public and of the landowner, and it would call the attention of landowners to the danger of allowing a right of way unless they intended to dedicate it to the public. He would be quite frank with hon. Members opposite, though he was afraid it would not carry them with him when he said that he was a little doubtful of the benefit to the public of prosecuting these rights of way. It must be remembered that rights of way were constantly getting seriously in the way of great public improvements and the beneficial development of land. Nobody who had had much to do with railway and waterworks companies would contradict him when he said that one of the difficulties with which they had to deal were footpaths which were little used but were technically highways, and could only be got rid of by an Act of Parliament. He was doubtful whether, on the whole, the multiplication of rights of way was a public benefit. On the contrary, he thought it was the reverse. His support of the Bill was based simply on the fact that it would define more accurately the rights of the contending parties, because it was desirable that there should be as little dispute on these matters as possible, and that when it came to litigation the dispute should be as simple as possible. For these reasons he thought it was a desirable Bill, and he hoped it would be passed into law. He had always felt that the great blot upon the procedure of this House was that there were not two channels for legislation, one reserved for contentious measures, the passage of which should be made as difficult as possible, and the other for non-contentious measures, which should be given a short and simple path to the Statute-book. He had always felt that, and would be glad to join with any hon. Member who would devise some means to bring it about. It was a matter which did not affect the front benches because such measures as would be benefited would not be much spoken about on the platforms of the country. If any Member felt inclined to enter with him upon such a crusade he would give him such help as he was able.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Sir W. ROBSON, South Shields), who was indistinctly heard, was understood to say that he thought the noble Lord who had just sat down had been a little hard upon the front benches. But the Bill was, as the noble Lord had just said, a small one, very restricted in scope, and very modest in aim. It did not affect existing rights very substantially. In fact it did not affect them at all, but it simplified the proceedings and facilitated the enforcement and the proof of those rights. The landowner would have, under this Bill, the same power as he had had now for many centuries of interrupting the public user of a way, or of preventing any injurious inference of an act of dedication being drawn. The Bill simply stated that proof of user for certain periods should be sufficient to establish presumption of dedication, and that where the right of way had been enjoyed for a full period of forty years it should be deemed conclusively to have been dedicated as a public highway unless there was evidence negativing such dedication. It had been pointed out that the way in which public rights had been acquired in England was by either direct or presumed dedication. The law would presume that proof of user would be unnecessary, for instance, in a case of a building estate where the roads had been thrown open as part of the development of the estate and there had been no user beyond a few weeks or days. On the other hand, it might be necessary to prove a very long user to establish a right; the proof might go back for twenty years, and yet the circumstances be such as to rebut the presumption of actual dedication. In the case of land in the possession of a lunatic, proof of user had to go back thirty or forty years. In the Courts, some Judges had said that, if proof of user went to the limit of living memory—that was, that the oldest inhabitant had always known it to be open for use—under such circumstances they would infer that there had been a dedication, no matter how remote that dedication might have been. One case went back as far as the time of Queen Mary, and the learned Judge in that case expressed the opinion that where a user had been established for forty years he was entitled to presume there had been dedication not only as far back as the time of Queen Mary but the time of William the Conqueror. But other Judges had construed the fact of dedication much more strictly, and in regard to litigation of this kind it was, at the present time, impossible to say how the Courts would decide. All that this Bill proposed to do was to settle the law, and to simplify procedure. In substance it was proposed to confer upon the public, in respect of their rights, just the same procedure as existed in the case of private rights of way. In dealing with private rights, the Courts were assisted by Statute, and this Bill laid down a simple and cheap procedure. That was important to the landowner in every way, because by the Local Government Act public rights of way were placed now under the guardianship of public bodies, and they would be able to be fought and vindicated more frequently than before, and the landowner had therefore an interest in the law being as cheap as possible. This Bill did not alter the law as to the facts; it merely said that certain facts, generally regarded by Judges and juries as sufficient, should by law be sufficient to prove user. The House of Commons did not think twelve years possession an unreasonable time to establish a title to the freehold and enable a man to take possession of the actual land. Twelve years user of land, under conditions which showed that a man intended to assert his right to it, gave him the actual soil and a freehold of that land. Therefore, if Parliament thought fit, after such a short period as that, to confer a statutory title upon the man who was using the land, surely it did not seem unreasonable to say that in the case of public rights of way twenty years in the one case, and forty years in the other, should be considered to be sufficient. He hoped the House would pass the Bill.

Mr. ALEXANDER CROSS (Glasgow, Camlachie) said the noble Lord behind him had indicated that in his view there was no large volume of public opinion behind the Bill, or at all events not sufficient to justify its passage into law, yet he went on to say that there was nothing about it more jealously guarded than any intrusion of the rights of the public. He (Mr. Cross) made a strong point of that. Private ownership of land tended to arrogate to itself more and more of the rights of possession. The old rights enjoyed by the public in the old times were very numerous, and he considered that in many cases railways, large buildings, and other erections, that took place on land, made the extinguishment of those rights a matter of impossibility to the landowner, but that made it all the more necessary that public rights should be conserved, and that the litigation which might arise should be less costly than in the past. Like his hon. friend who spoke from the front bench, he had himself borne a large share in the defence of public rights of way, and in one particular case it was taken in the Scottish Chambers of Justice and passed through other Courts and was only maintained by an appeal to the House of Lords, undertaken at great private expense. It was because he believed there was no public feeling in regard to access to land more clear in the general sentiments of the people of this country, particularly of Scotland, than that they desired to preserve the ancient rights of way, that he had pleasure in supporting this Bill.

Mr. MEYSEY THOMPSON (Staffordshire, Handsworth) said he should like to have one or two points elucidated. He thought the Bill if passed, might have a serious effect in causing landowners to be chary about granting privileges. One of the supporters of the Bill had referred to the fact that if a path became a highway, what guarantee had they that next year the Government would not bring in a Bill to say that a public highway could be used for all purposes by the public? Let them take the case of a landowner who granted privileges to the villagers to use a path running by the end of his house down the carriage drive; supposing a Bill was brought in, that man's house might be made unfit to live in by motor cars being allowed to pass along the path. Another point he wished to be clear about was this: As soon as a path became a right of way, who paid for its maintenance? Was the maintenance still paid by the owner, or would it be maintained out of the rates?

Sir W. ROBSON: This Bill does not deal with that question at all.

Mr. MEYSEY THOMPSON said that if a path became a right of way and was to be used by the public, it was very hard that the owner should still have to pay for the increased wear and tear on the path. In the case of waterways, as soon as one became a right of way they might say that an ornamental bridge was no longer fitted for the traffic over it, and have an ugly erection put up in one's grounds to enable the traffic to go over it. That was what would happen if the road was to be maintained out of the rates. He thought it was a Bill that was very apt to cause exactly the opposite effect to that desired, viz., the effect of shutting up footpaths and waterways.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 160; Noes, 13. (Division List No. 109.)

AYES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Ashley, W. W.
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Beale, W. P.
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.

Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowerman, C. W.
Bowles, G. Stewart
Brace, William
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Burke, E. Haviland-
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Cobbold, Felix Thornley
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins, Sir Wm. J. (S. Pancras, W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Cox, Harold
Crean, Eugene
Crooks, William
Cross, Alexander
Devlin, Joseph
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Elibank, Master of
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hayden, John Patrick
Helme, Norval Watson

Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, John (Gateshead)
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lupton, Arnold
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Murray, Capt. Hn A. C. (Kincard.
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nussey, Thomas Willans
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearson, Sir W. D. (Colchester)
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Perks, Robert William
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central
Radford, G. H.
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel

Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Renton, Leslie
Richards, Thomas (W. Monm'th
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mp'n
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sears, J. E.
Seddon, J.
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N.W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Verney, F. W.
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whiteley, Rt. Hn. G. (York, W.R
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Winfrey and Mr. Arthur Dewar.

NOES.

Arkwright, John Stanhope
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Courthope, G. Loyd
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Fell, Arthur

Gordon, J.
Gretton, John
Helmsley, Viscount
Hunt, Rowland
M'Arthur, Charles
Meysey Thompson, E. C.

Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Captain Craig.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

COAL MINES (CHECKWEIGHERS) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. CALDWELL): This Bill is out of order. Clauses 2 and 3 go beyond the title of the Bill, so that the Bill cannot proceed.

MR. BRACE (Glamorganshire, S.) said he was afraid, after consultation with Mr. Speaker, that he could not contest that ruling, but he should like to say, on behalf of the Federation responsible for the introduction of the measure, that they handed all the material to a properly trained draftsman and a legal gentleman. It only showed the pitfalls they were all liable to in connection with that matter, and he could only express his regret that the Bill should be prevented from coming on.

Whereupon the order was discharged, and the Bill withdrawn.

ACCESS TO MOUNTAINS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The provisions of this Bill are practically identical with those of the Access to Mountains Bill which has passed the Second Reading and is now before the Standing Committee. This Bill, therefore, cannot be proceeded with as the House has already given a judgment upon it.

Whereupon the order was discharged, and the Bill withdrawn.

COMMONS BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

MR. PIKE PEASE (Darlington) said that in view of the fact that two Bills had been withdrawn quite unexpectedly, and that a large number of Members interested in this Bill were not present, he thought the consideration of the Bill should be adjourned.

*MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland) thought it would be rather unreasonable not to proceed with the Bill, because it was one which dealt with only one or two and not any very vital points in connection with the laws for the regulation of commons, which he thought the House was quite capable of deciding. He had been asked to move the Second Reading of the Bill by the hon. Baronet the Member for Northwich, whose name was on the Bill. The object was to facilitate the regulation of commons. There would, he thought, be no difference of opinion as to the desirability and value of the general regulation of commons so that they might be used to the best purpose. Constantly it was found that commons in various parts of the country required drainage or fencing, that there were rights of the commoners which needed to be regulated, that arrangements were desirable for recreation of various kinds, for fencing in cricket pitches and golf greens, and for preventing the destruction of birds' nests or injuring the timber, and for preventing fires, which were of very frequent occurrence where no proper regulations were made. There was in existence at the present time means for providing regulations by Provisional Order after careful consideration, in the first place, by the Board of Agriculture, then by a Select Committee of that House, and then by Provisional Order passed in that House. Regulations could not be undertaken at all unless one-third of those interested in the common desired them, and a Provisional Order could not be brought forward unless two-thirds of the commoners interested were ready to accept the Provisional Order proposed. Besides that, the lord of the manor could exercise an absolute veto, and prevent regulations being made. What the Bill proposed to do was not very revolutionary. It was simply to abolish the veto of the lord of the manor. He said it was not revolutionary because in the case of the London commons, by an Act of 1866 the veto of the lord of the manor was abolished. It was left entirely to the commoners and to the Board of Agriculture, irrespective of any veto of the lord of the manor, to make regulations if desired in London, and there did not really seem any reason why that should not be extended to country districts. It had been calculated, he thought with fair accuracy, that the interests of the lord of the manor in commons averaged out at about one-fifteenth of the general interests in such common lands, taking the commons all over the country, and it seemed unreasonable that a man with one-fifteenth of the interest should be able to exercise an absolute veto as against very likely the whole of the rest of the commoners. Those who had been interested in providing regulation schemes told him that the veto of the lord of the manor exercised a considerable effect in preventing the regulation of commons. He thought that would be obvious to the House when he mentioned the fact that there had been only thirty regulations of commons carried through in the last thirty years, and that the veto was a considerable bar to proper regulations. According to a Report in 1886 by the Lands Commissioners, who discussed why the regulations of commons in the last ten years prior to their inquiry proceeded at such a very moderate rate, they came to the conclusion that the right of the lord of the manor to veto application for regulation which was given by the Enclosures Act was a hindrance to regulation. He, therefore, hoped the House would accept the general principle of the Bill, and he thought they would find, if they looked into it in detail in Committee, that all reasonable rights of the lord of the manor were properly preserved in the Bill. In the first place the rights of the lord of the manor were not prejudicially affected by the Bill, and he was able to exercise his influence as owner of part of the common rights together with the other commoners, and he would be able to exercise that influence when it was a question of deciding whether these regulations should be undertaken or not. He had his share with the other commoners. Finally, the House might feel that it was not likely that the rights of the lord of the manor would be in any way prejudicially affected, because that House itself had the most complete control over any schemes made under the Enclosures Act. In the first place there was the Select Committee to which the schemes would have to go, and, secondly, all these schemes had to pass by way of Provisional Order Bill through that House. He, therefore, hoped that this small amendment of the law would be accepted fairly readily by the House. He did not think that he need go into the other clauses, because they were mostly of a minor character and consequential.

LORD R. CECIL: Will the hon. Member explain the meaning of Clause 8? It is very difficult to understand.

MR. TREVELYAN: The practical effect of Clause 8 is that it will give to the parish councils the use of any exhausted parish lands for recreation grounds.

LORD R. CECIL: Exhausted parish lands—what are they?

MR. TREVELYAN: They are lands which have been used for quarries and worked out. I beg to move.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

CAPTAIN CRAIG thought that the House would agree that the Bill of which they had just concluded the discussion in reference to rights of way was one as to which the mover had taken them into his confidence, explaining every portion of it in a clear and concise way. In this case, they had a Bill of first class importance thrown upon the House without a word of explanation such as was usual with a Bill of this nature. The measure was brought suddenly upon them owing to the previous two Bills on the Paper having been ruled out of order. It affected all the commons throughout the country, a fairly wide subject; besides which it went in for legislation by reference. He himself had had no opportunity of turning to the Acts named in the Bill, and for all the House knew about those Acts, which had been in force for some years, they might be of the most revolutionary character. Yet this whole question was brought before them and they were asked to discuss it though they had not had the least idea that it would be brought forward by the hon. Member, who was perfectly able and clever enough to have given them full details. The Radical Party, who backed the Rights of Way Bill, had also supported the Bill in regard to deer forests last Friday, and they would have backed up another Bill that day if it had not been ruled out of order by Mr. Deputy Speaker. Every Friday they had some proposal from the Radical and Labour Party to take property which belonged to somebody else. Whatever else underlay these Bills, that was really what they came to. The hon. Member who had moved the Second Reading had said that every precaution had been taken that the rights of the lord of the manor should be preserved. He thought that the hon. Gentleman, having felt a qualm of conscience, had corrected himself by saying that all "reasonable rights" should be preserved to the lord of the manor. On that practically turned the whole question of whether or not any of them would be in favour of this Bill. The hon. Gentleman had said at first that the Bill would preserve all the rights of the lord of the manor, and then in the next breath he said "all reasonable rights." But it was just there they found so much difficulty in appreciating the Bill, and it was just there that he personally wished to take the opportunity of moving its rejection. They had now got access to mountains; they had got the rights of way under the control of the various local authorities, and now they had the question raised of what they were to do with the commons. It was a most revolutionary proposal. The hon. Member said that all reasonable rights would under this Bill be preserved to the lord of the manor. What were the rights of the lord of the manor now as compared with what they would be under this Bill if it became law? So far as he knew the lords of the manor now had the veto or last word with regard to any change proposed to be made in the commons, and there was no exception to the lord of the manor having the last word as to any agreements which were made for the convenience of the commoners. He presumed he was correct in saying that, but if he was not perhaps some hon. and learned Member would correct him. But this Bill took the veto away, and therefore the hon. Member's statement that it preserved all the reasonable rights of the lord of the manor seemed to him to be somewhat contradicted by the Bill. If, for instance, Clause 8, which was passed over in such a perfunctory manner by the hon. Gentleman, was studied, hon. Members would see that the lord of the manor had not a word to say with regard to what should be done in respect of exhausted parish lands; indeed, all through the Bill there was a depriving of the lord of the manor of ancient rights and privileges. Was any body of men in the country more interested in seeing that the commons were properly supervised and used to the greatest advantage of the commoners than the lords of the manor? The lord of the manor was practically lord of the soil to a considerable extent, and he had to take into consideration the whole of the property of the neighbourhood and see that it and the commons harmonised. That was what had been done hitherto, and it was that which gave the country parts of England their prosperous and beautiful appearance. But it seemed to him that this Bill, looking at it superficially, which was the only way they had an opportunity of looking at it, would imperil that harmony, peace, and quietness which had hitherto characterised the relations between the lords of the soil and the commoners. It was neither right nor reasonable that the House should have thrust upon it on a Friday afternoon, without notice, an intricate Bill without at all events some explanation. The character of the commons might at any time by a wild move on the part of a certain number of commoners be hastily changed if this Bill were passed, whereas from time immemorial they had been cautiously watched by lords of the manor. The lord of the manor was a sort of Upper Chamber ready at all times to veto anything of a radical nature proposed by the commoners, and he proved a valuable safeguard for the preservation of those rights, such as grazing, shooting, and occupying, which had been handed down from generation to generation. The present generation, he thought, ought to be very chary of making any alteration. If cricket pitches and football grounds and other facilities for enjoyment were wanted on commons, it was very easy to apply to the lord of the manor. There were very few instances where a lord of the manor refused such requests or interfered so long as everything was fair in the interests of himself and his successors; and it would be very unwise indeed to make a change at such short notice. He had occasion earlier in the afternoon to protest against the absence of any Law Officers for Ireland to answer undoubtedly important legal questions as they affected Ireland; and in this Bill also they had no Law Officers for Ireland present to keep them right. After all, the law relating to commons in Ireland was very distinctive indeed; it was absolutely useless to go on discussing a Bill which referred to Ireland unless they had a Law Officer of the Crown for Ireland or the Chief Secretary present to answer questions. On that ground and also because the House was not prepared to legislate on such a large and important subject he moved the adjournment of the debate.

Sir PHILIP MAGNUS (London University) seconded.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the debate be now adjourned."—(*Captain Craig.*)

Lord R. CECIL hoped the House would assent to the Motion for the adjournment. It seemed perfectly reasonable under the circumstances. It would not be a moral lesson to those who were sometimes accused of talking unduly, if they were told, as a punishment for restraining themselves in regard to one Bill, that they were to be made to pass another Bill which they had not had the opportunity of studying. After the Rights of Way Bill, there was the Coal Mines (Checkweighers) Bill. It was one which he had looked into, and, seeing that it was a measure that would divide hon. Members, and would be likely to last the rest of the sitting, he did not think it necessary to inform himself of the other measures on the Paper. It was not quite fair to hon. Members to undertake the discussion of a measure of this description when no one had any notion that it would come before the House that afternoon. Those who had had an opportunity of reading it, would see that the Bill was one of all others which certainly ought not to be brought up without proper warning and consideration. It was a remarkable instance of the vice of legislation by reference, and it was all the more remarkable because on the back of the Bill was the name of the hon. Baronet the Member for the Northwich Division of Cheshire who was known as a very violent, and justly violent, opponent of that kind of legislation. He would give some of the instances of this legislation by reference.

*Mr. SPEAKER: The Motion for the adjournment having been moved, no discussion can take place on the Bill.

Lord R. CECIL said he was only trying to give reasons why the debate should be adjourned.

*Mr. SPEAKER: If the noble Lord refers to the clauses of the Bill, he will be discussing it.

Lord R. CECIL said he would not discuss it more than to say that if hon. Members would read the Bill they would see that his observation was well founded, and that the clauses were exceedingly complicated and difficult, and made reference to a large amount of other legislation. It was, he thought, a double offence against legislative propriety to bring such a Bill before the House without any kind of warning, and without giving hon. Members an opportunity of considering it at all. It was one thing to be able to master the contents of a single Bill, but it was another and a very much more difficult thing if one had to read and digest a very large amount of other legislation. He could not help thinking that the House would be better advised on that warm afternoon to take the opportunity of enjoying the fresh air than to press forward with the Bill. If that course were taken, hon. Members opposite would not have cause to repent of their consideration. He really thought the House would be ill discharging its duty if it insisted upon passing a measure of this description without warning.

Mr. LUPTON (Lincolnshire, Sleaford) said that several Members opposite had commented on the fact that there were no Law Officers of the Crown present. It seemed to him of great importance that in discussing measures of this kind they should have the assistance of the Law Officers. They ought to have the best legal information to assist them every day they were there. He did not mean that all the Law Officers should sit all day long on that bench, but they always ought to be at hand, and some of them ought always to be on the front bench. They did not get the legal assistance to which they were entitled, though that was not peculiar to this Government. He hoped the time was not far distant when they would as a rule see the Law Officers for Scotland, England, and Ireland always upon that bench, so that when a Bill was brought in dealing with the whole kingdom it should not be thrown in their face and urged as a reason for delay that the Law Officers were not present to guide the House.

Mr. LANE-FOX (Yorkshire, W.R., Barkston Ash) said the Speaker had ruled that they were not entitled to discuss the Bill at that particular moment, and he was not anxious to discuss the Bill. But hon. Members did not thoroughly understand its provisions for the reason that they had had no opportunity of discovering what they were. From a cursory glance it appeared to him that the Bill might cause very great danger to the beauty of the country. They had come to the House intending to vote on other Bills which were first, second and third on the Paper; and which were now out of the way. It was perfectly impossible for them or for hon. Members opposite, who often claimed a larger share of intelligence, to bring intelligence to bear on this Bill. The mover of the Bill no doubt thoroughly understood its provisions, but he had not taken the least trouble to explain many of them, and it was impossible by a cursory glance at the Bill, without referring to the passages which were embodied in it, to come to a decision on it. He had got hold of two of the main statutes which were alluded to, and it was perfectly impossible to see in the few minutes he had had how they affected the main provisions of the Bill, and to what extent they were embodied in it. He hoped in the interests of intelligent legislation the Motion for adjournment would be carried and that they would not go on considering Bills which they could not understand, on which they could not give an intelligent vote, and which might have consequences which none of them could foresee.

Mr. WHITLEY (Halifax) said he was very reluctant to interfere on a private Members' day, but when he heard that the two intermediate Bills were going to be ruled out of order he had taken steps to gather what was the view generally in the House with regard to further proceedings. It seemed to him the general view was that this Commons Bill, being on almost the same subject as the Bill already dealt with and largely the same persons being interested, should be proceeded with. He gathered also that it was the general feeling of the House that after this Bill others of a different character should not be taken, and he thought it would be the view of the Government that if this Bill went through they should not proceed further. With regard to this Bill the Law Officers of the Crown were in attendance. The Solicitor-General had listened to the only speech made in criticism of the Bill, and was in attendance to deal with other criticisms if they should require his reply. Under those circumstances he would suggest that the House might proceed with this Bill, and that other Bills should not be proceeded with. He hoped the Motion would not be pressed.

Sir F. BANBURY said he was very much obliged to the hon. Gentleman for the trouble he had taken in ascertaining the wishes of the House as to what Bills should be proceeded with. He was evidently of the opinion that it would be inadvisable under the circumstances to proceed with other Bills, but he made an exception with regard to this because the general opinion was that it should be proceeded with. Might he ask whether the hon. Gentleman had taken the opinion of the Opposition, and if it was not consistent with all traditions of Parliament that the minority, however small and insignificant, should be consulted upon a question as to what business was or was not to be taken?

Mr. WHITLEY: I did consult the other side of the House. I was expressing the general opinion after having spoken to all parts of the House.

Sir F. BANBURY said he was much obliged, but he did not know whom the hon. Gentleman had consulted on that side of the House, because the right hon. Gentleman who was, he presumed, the Leader of the Opposition at the moment, was against proceeding with the Bill, as was everyone else on those benches. They were entitled to some consideration on an occasion like that. He had made research into the Checkweighers Bill, and spent considerable time and study in preparing his notes thereon, because he always endeavoured before addressing the House to master the facts of the question to be considered. In these circumstances, and not having any idea that the Bill was out of order, it was absolutely impossible for him to have mastered the contents of the present Bill. He did not intend to allude to them because he did not know what they were. That was his argument

—that they were asked to discuss a Bill about which they knew absolutely nothing, and on which it was impossible for them to have informed themselves. He saw the name of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Northwich on the back of the Bill. Where was the right hon. Baronet? Surely it was the invariable custom that the Member whose name appeared first on the Bill should have something to say as to whether it should be taken or not. He had as much right to say he believed the right hon. Baronet was opposed to the Bill being taken at that hour and under those circumstances as the hon. Gentleman had to say he was in favour of it. They neither of them knew what his views were. The hon. Member for Market Harborough was not present either. In fact he could see only one Member whose name was on the Bill.

MR. TREVELYAN said he was particularly asked by the right hon. Baronet to introduce the Bill because he knew he could not be present.

SIR F. BANBURY said that that was a proof that his contention was right. The right hon. Baronet had asked the hon. Member for two reasons—first, because he could not be there; and, secondly, because he knew the Bill was not coming on. All he wanted the hon. Member to do was to say "Monday" or "Tuesday" when the clerk called the name of the Bill. The last division showed there were, he believed, 173 Members present. A simple calculation showed that there were 500 away. They were asked to pass an important Bill in an hour and a half when 500 Members were away, none of whom could have expected the Bill to come on. The proposition was so self-evident that it was unnecessary for him to say anything more. He hoped the House would adopt the Motion on the understanding that when it was carried the House would rise. He would not go into the question of it being a fine summer afternoon. He was always willing to be present whether it was wet or fine. He had a great love and admiration for the House of Commons, and he did not want to see it make itself ridiculous; when it passed legislation he wanted it to be in a state to understand the legislation it was going to pass. He should heartily vote for the Motion.

SIR J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire) thought many of the objections taken to proceeding with the Bill were really matters which could be dealt with in Committee. The absence of 500 Members on a fine summer's day was not a reason why they who were at their places should be debarred from seeing the Bill read a second time. He would like to have spent the afternoon on one of the numerous commons round his home in Surrey, but he knew too well that they wanted regulating. There were many things to be done about these commons, and therefore he and no doubt many of his hon. friends were there to do a piece of business if the Rules of the House, without any particular strain, would permit. Far would it be from him to insist on hasty legislation or anything that might come within the term "sharp practice," but they were only following the ordinary procedure of the House. As to the difficulties of legislation by reference, he thought in the present case they hardly existed.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth) said there were two proposals before them. One was whether they should adjourn and enjoy these commons which it was proposed to discuss, and the other was whether they should spend the afternoon in, as far as he could see, trying to destroy them. The hon. Baronet proposed that they should go and enjoy themselves on those commons, and he heartily supported him. The Bill had been sprung on them. Were there half a dozen gentlemen who had read it, who had gone through all the references and read the Acts to which it referred, and were therefore in a position to speak and vote on it? Was there anyone who knew what it meant and could vote on it honestly? The hon. Member for Cambridge University was entrenched with books which he believed contained some of the Acts referred to. He might in half an hour with his legal knowledge be able to master it, but was it possible for them all similarly to obtain copies of the Bill and thoroughly master it? Was it reasonable? Had they ever done it before? On these grounds he heartily supported the proposal that they should adjourn.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping) thought it would not be foreign to the present debate to ask that at all events some reason should be adduced in answer to the various arguments which had been put forward by Members of the Opposition as to why they should not proceed with the Bill. It had been said that no one expected the Bill to come on, and that there was a great deal of legislation by reference, and various other points had been made, and they had heard no reason at all why these arguments should not be accepted by the House. The hon. Member for Halifax had stated that the opinion of the House was in favour of proceeding with the Bill, but the minority had not been consulted on the question, as it ought to be, however small it was. There was nothing important in the Bill that could not wait—nothing of such vital importance that they should pass it without any knowledge of what it contained. There was extraordinary unanimity on that point. They had heard no one who said he understood it. Some of his colleagues were the most industrious Members the House contained—the hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, for instance—and if he did not understand it he did not suppose there was anybody in the House who did. Small as they were in numbers, at all events they were as intelligent as hon. Members opposite. Perhaps that was going rather a long way, but they might hope to attain to it, and they might ask for some reason in favour of proceeding with a Bill which no one expected to come on or understood in the least. He should like to know what the mover had in mind when he placed his name on the back of the Bill. Had he studied it? Had he gone into the statutes, and was he of opinion that it was of advantage to the idea he had in his mind that they should proceed to discuss it?

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow) said that hon. Members opposite wanted the House to buy a pig in a poke. It was perfectly absurd to suppose that anyone could understand the Bill unless they had given very serious consideration to it. Would anybody on the opposite side get up and say they really thought a dozen Members in the House understood anything about it? It was a very strong order to try and shove a Bill through under such conditions, perfectly well knowing that nobody knew anything about it.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 48; Noes, 161. (Division List No. 110.)

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Rt Hn. Sir Alex. F
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Ashley, W. W.
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bottomley, Horatio
Bowles, G. Stewart
Carlile, E. Hildred
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred Dixon
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Fell, Arthur
Gibbs, G. A. (Bristol, West)
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham)
Gordon, J.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Helmsley, Viscount
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Kerry, Earl of
Kimber, Sir Henry
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
Magnus, Sir Philip
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Rasch, Sir Frederic Carne
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Thomson, W. Mitchell-(Lanark)
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Watt, Henry A.
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Captain Craig and Mr. Meysey-Thompson.

NOES.

Acland, Francis Dyke
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baring, Godfrey (Isle of Wight)
Barker, John
Barnes, G. N.
Beale, W. P.
Bellairs, Carlyon
Benn, W. (T'w'r Hamlets, S. Geo.

Bennett, E. N.
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Boland, John
Bowerman, C. W.
Brigg, John
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brooke, Stopford
Bryce, J. Annan
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron Robert
Causton Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Cheetham, John Frederick
Clancy, John Joseph
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cox, Harold
Crooks, William
Cullinan, J.
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Arthur (Edinburgh, S.)
Dickinson,W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Elibank, Master of
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Findlay, Alexander
Flynn, James Christopher
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Halpin, J.
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harwood, George
Haworth, Arthur A.
Helme, Norval Watson
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor(Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jowett, F. W.
Joyce, Michael
Kekewich, Sir George
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lupton, Arnold
Luttrell, Hugh Fownes
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
MacVeagh, Jeremiah (Down, S.
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Arthur, Charles
M'Callum, John M.
M'Crae, George
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Marnham, F. J.
Masterman, C. F. G.
Menzies, Walter
Molteno, Percy Alport
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morrell, Philip
Murray,Capt.HnA.C. (Kincard.
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Napier, T. B.
Nicholls, George
Nicholson,Charles N.(Doncast'r
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, James(Wicklow,W.)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pease, J. A. (Saffron Walden)
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E.(Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John(Norfolk, E.)
Priestley,W.E.B.(Bradford,E,)
Raphael, Herbert H.
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rees, J. D.
Richards, Thomas(W.Monm'th
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rowlands, J.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Sandys, Lieut.-Col.Thos. Myles
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehy, David
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Stanger, H. Y.
Steadman, W. C.
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, John W. (Durham)
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Verney, F. W.
Vivian, Henry
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Wardle, George J.
Wason, John Cathcart(Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williams, J. (Glamorgan)
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth
Williamson, A.
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Mr. Trevelyan and Mr. Lyulph Stanley.

Original Question again proposed.

*SIR A. ACLAND-HOOD (Somersetshire, Wellington) said he desired to put a few questions to the Solicitor-General, not on behalf of the lords of the manor or of any sporting rights, but purely on behalf of the existing commoners who held common rights. He was not speaking of the sort of commons or village greens which were found in Surrey, but of large tracts of land, covered with herbage and underwood, over which certain commoners had rights, such as turbary, stocking, and cutting underwood, to which they attached considerable importance. He would have no objection to the Bill if it recognised and scheduled those rights, and prevented unauthorised persons from using them. One of the greatest grievances of owners was that these rights were always being infringed by unauthorised persons. It was a difficult thing to say who had got these particular common rights, because few of these poor people had any title which they could show. He believed the law was that those rights only attached to a particular tenement and lapsed when the tenement was removed.

He wished to say a few words as to the rights of the lords of the manor. He had shown how valuable those rights were to a commoner, but supposing anybody infringed the rights of these poor commoners, how were they going to fight their case? In a case which had come within his own experience a man began to build a house on such a tract of common land. The commoners did not know what to do. They could not combine, because they were not sure of their legal *status*. The only person who could do anything was the lord of the manor. They went to him (the speaker) and he did the common-sense thing, for he took his own men with him and pulled the house down. He thought those commoners had supported him at the poll ever since. In all villages there was a tendency to take vacant farm houses and cottages and turn them into residential buildings, and the first thing they wanted to do was to make a lawn tennis ground. Often they came to him to ask for power to take turf and he refused on the ground that it deprived the people of their stock runs and the hills of their wild beauty. Under this Bill the lord of the manor would have no such powers, and he very much doubted whether the parish council would exercise the powers that were given to them. The framers of the Bill must have had in their minds the ordinary common of the sort that was to be seen in Hampshire. They had not in mind those great tracts of land which were the ordinary adjuncts to the villages in the counties of Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall. There was a large population in his division who lived on the edge of the hillside and provided a source of very valuable labour for the farmers during the summer months. In the winter time they got their living by making brooms and cutting and selling underwood. He earnestly appealed to the House not to pass any legislation which would take away from a very poor but deserving class, their principal means of livelihood, and transfer very old and valued rights to an entirely new community at the discretion of the parish council.

*Sir S. EVANS said that the right hon. Baronet had, apparently to a great extent, misconceived the object of the provisions of the Bill, and he could assure him that, if it passed, it would have none of those injurious effects of which he had spoken with so much alarm. The main object of the Bill was to prevent one man stopping the regulation of the common under the Commons Act of 1876, when the very large majority of the commoners desired to have such regulation. Within such objects as were laid down in that Act there was no interference whatever with the right of any single commoner, and those rights were specifically expressly preserved in this Bill and by the Acts of 1876 and 1899. His right hon. friend need not therefore be afraid that there was anything in the Bill which affected the interests of the commoners or of any lord of the manor, except in one particular. Before any provisional order could be made by the Board of Agriculture there must be a local inquiry, at which the Board, through its representative, must be satisfied that they had got the consent of persons representing at least two-thirds in value of the local interests of the common. The order made by the Board of Agriculture had then to be confirmed by Parliament, so that every possible means was given to everybody to see that nothing unjust or unfair was done. If the order had been made with the consent of two-thirds in value of those interested, it could, at the present moment, be prevented from taking effect by the mere veto of the lord of the manor. It could not reasonably be desired that the lord of the manor by his own individual veto should thwart the wishes of the vast majority of the persons interested in the common, and go against the recommendation of the Board of Agriculture, after the fullest local inquiry. That was the main provision of this Bill. If Members wished to maintain the right of absolute veto by one man without his giving, or possibly having, any reason for it, they should vote against the Second Reading of the Bill. He did not, however, think anybody could rightly say that where there had been a local inquiry and an expression of opinion of the vast majority of the commoners it ought to be in the power of one person to exercise a veto in virtue of an old title.

Sir A. ACLAND-HOOD asked a question as to the protection of the existing commoner against the new commoner.

*Sir S. EVANS said that in any order they would have to consider the local interests of the commoners. The common would have to be regulated for those who were interested in it. They were not dealing with the question of trespassers at all. He did not condemn in any way the action of the right hon. Gentleman in pulling down a trespasser's house. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman would, as a magistrate, take care to avoid being guilty of a breach of the peace. As long as this precaution was observed he had acted quite within his rights, and probably had done very cheaply and expeditiously what could only be done otherwise after a great deal of trouble and litigation, and he was not surprised that in this he had the full approval of his commoners.

Lord R. CECIL called attention to the unsatisfactory way in which he considered some of the clauses were drafted, and if the Bill went any further than the present stage he hoped some steps would be taken to make them more intelligible. The main part of the Bill was contained in the second section which was in the following terms—

> "Notwithstanding anything contained in the Inclosure Acts, 1845 to 1899, the Board of Agriculture may certify the expediency of a Provisional Order for the regulation of a manorial common without obtaining the consent of the lord of the manor to such Order or to the draft thereof."

That was not a very convenient way of legislating. It put on anyone who wished to know what the provisions of the Bill were the duty of searching through the Acts from 1845 to 1899, but he admitted that there were considerable drafting difficulties in putting it more simply. He happened to have personal knowledge of the working of the Inclosure Acts. His right hon. friend the Member for the Wellington Division of Somerset had pointed out how very conveniently a meadow might be managed without infringement of the commoners' use of it by the lord of the manor if he was left to deal with it without undue officialdom and red tape. He would tell the House his experience of a considerable common in the South of England, known as Ashdown Common, Sussex, which was under the control of a Board of Conservators by an Act passed some time in the early seventies. There had been disputes over and over again between the conservators and the commoners, and a serious state of things had arisen. The Solicitor-General had told them that the right of commoners would not be interfered with under any regulation scheme of the Act of 1876. That might be so technically, but it was not so in the case of the Ashdown commoners. He did not pretend to know who was right or who was wrong, but there was a most bitter dispute going on. The commoners claimed the right—and they had the right—of feeding their cattle on the common. They also had the right to the fodder and to take it home. That was undisputed.

They further claimed, however, the right to sell it, and the conservators objected to this, hence the whole dispute. The commoners declared they had had the right to sell this litter and fodder for many years and that it was a gross hardship on them that their rights should be interfered with in that respect. If the matter had been in the hands of the lord of the manor what would have happened would have been that the commoners would have sent a deputation to him, and in all probability the matter would have been settled by mutual concessions. But under the conservators, the whole matter was in the hands of the clerk, who lived miles away in a distant part of Sussex. Before the commoners could go to the conservators they had to go to this gentleman; and he would have to bring the question before a meeting of the conservators, and matters would never get any "forrarder." The result in this particular case had been that a dangerous feeling had sprung up in the district. The existing state of things there was really an outrage on civilisation. If it had occurred on the other side of St. George's Channel it would have given rise to many Questions in this House and very properly so, and the Chief Secretary would have had many anxious hours. Year after year great tracts of this common were burned by incendiaries, who poured paraffin or some such stuff on the heather, and when the fire sprang up they were a long way off and it was impossible to detect who had caused the fires. The conservators were powerless. They had appointed a second ranger, but how could two rangers effectively watch a common twenty miles long and many miles broad? These fires occurred whenever there was a dry season, and whenever the gorse and heather were in a condition to be burned. Serious danger often threatened the houses bordering the common. All that arose from the faulty nature of the government of the common.

Lord R. Cecil.

All these things might have been avoided if the law of the common had been allowed to remain in its pristine condition of elasticity. He could tell of many other disputes which had arisen. There was a part of the common upon which golf was played, and the disputes over this portion had been enormous. Sometimes the commoners objected to the golf-players, and at other times the conservators had raised the question whether the golf club was not infringing their rights. Quite recently the lord of the manor, who was thought to be dead, had risen again and developed rights of his own, threatening to turn the golf club off the common altogether unless they were prepared to pay a large sum of money. These troubles had arisen largely by reason of the regulation of the common, and he doubted whether it was a wise thing for those who were promoting the Bill to insist on the regulation of commons. He did not know that by regulation they would get advantages which they did not get by leaving the management in the hands of the lord of the manor. If the lord of the manor stood in the way of what was for the public advantage, no one would be doubtful of the necessity for the measure, but when they came to look into the matter more closely they saw that there was grave doubt whether any advantage would be got by regulating commons in the way proposed. The House was entitled to more elaborate reasons in defence of the desirability of regulating commons before they took away one of the obstacles which at present existed. They should be shown that what was in itself desirable had been prevented by the operation of the present law. If it could be shown that regulation was a desirable thing, then the mere question of the rights of the lord of the manor, protected as they were by provision for compensation, ought not to be absolutely conclusive in the matter. He had still a dislike for regulations of all kinds. It seemed to him that it was too often forgotten in that House, particularly by hon. Gentlemen opposite, that a rule or regulation was in itself an evil. He agreed that the Socialist view was that the more regulations we had the better—that individual freedom was a mistake. That was the position of the despot. The despot and the Socialist were agreed, but he was neither one nor the other, and he disliked all laws and regulations, though he sometimes supported them because it could be proved in some cases that the evil of being without them was greater than the evil of having them. But those who supported regulations had to show that they were going to do positive good, and he should certainly oppose in this House any further interference with personal liberty unless it was shown that it would do good. He begged to move that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

MR. MEYSEY THOMPSON seconded the Amendment.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Lord R. Cecil.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities) said that the Bill was one of those measures which it was just as well should be exposed. Nominally it was a Bill for securing public rights, but practically it was a Bill to secure the exclusive use of commons to the middle class. He had had experience of the use of these commons by that class. The common he had in his eye had been used to a large extent under sufferance, and the users of it were only kept within certain bounds by the right of an appeal to the lord of the manor. He referred to the common of Berkhampstead. To a large extent the lord of the manor had allowed golfers the use of the common. The royal game had been filched from his own country, vulgarised by the English, and turned into a subject of betting, until it had become an epidemic of madness south of the Tweed. It was threatening to spread over every unoccupied district and to destroy the solitude of many places which were formerly pleasant. In the case of the common to which he had referred the vast mass of the poorer inhabitants were to be deprived of their common rights, and they were to exercise no authority over, or interfere with, the use of the common in future. The Solicitor-General had quoted the limitation provided for by Clause 2, that the Provisional Order should not prejudicially affect profitable or beneficial rights. That was all very well, but there were other rights. The great mass of the inhabitants of the town of Berkhampstead had benefited by the use of the common as a place of recreation, but it was absolutely destroyed, especially on Sundays, by the selfish action of golfers, who practically monopolised the place. It was therefore impossible for the inhabitants to establish any beneficial or profitable right to the common, where they had been accustomed for generations past to walk about with their wives and children. That, however, was not profitable, and the Provisional Order might set such a claim as theirs altogether on one side. He was perfectly certain that not in one case only but in many cases these commons had been caught hold of by a certain class who entirely disregarded the interests and the rights of the class below them. The rights of this lower class would, in his opinion, be far safer in the hands of the lord of the manor, because he would have nothing to fear from the selfish use of the common by those who would be just the people to dominate the parish councils. In the case of Berkhampstead he did not believe there were half-a-dozen of the poor people who would dare to stand up against the parish council. It was only the knowledge that the lord of the manor could interfere and stop their use of the common, which kept selfish people within limits. He supported the Amendment.

*MR. C. H. CORBETT (Sussex, East Grinstead) said he was sorry he was not present to hear the whole of the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Marylebone. He only heard the end of the speech. He was one of the unfortunate conservators of Ashdown Forest at one time, and he knew the conservators were not great favourites with the noble Lord. There had been a great deal of bickering, and they had never been received with great favour. He did not think the noble Lord should be so hard on the conservators.

LORD R. CECIL said he did not intend to attack the conservators. He merely wished to point out that as a result of the system a series of disputes had arisen which the conservators had, in fact, been powerless to allay.

MR. C. H. CORBETT said he apologised. He did not hear all that was said by the noble Lord. He quite agreed with him that the regulating of Ashdown Forest was by no means perfect. It was a bad system, but the conservators had to use the regulations given them, and were quite powerless to alter them. That, however, was not a reason for not regulating the commons; it was a reason for regulating them properly. Let the House consider the scheme. Who elected these conservators? They were elected by men who had a vote in respect of the acres over which they claimed common rights. Some of these men had 1,200 votes, whereas ordinary commoners to whom the common was of some advantage had only two or three votes each. Was there not some difference between regulating a forest or a common so that all the people interested had some voice in the election of the conservators, and leaving it practically in the hands not of one lord of the manor, but of half-a-dozen? If the Bill could only apply, therefore, to Ashdown Forest, he thought it would be a great improvement on the present regulation. The noble Lord must remember that this regulation was the result of a lawsuit between the lord of the manor and the commoners. The commoners thought the lord of the manor was trying to deprive them of their rights, and they appealed to the Law Courts to get this regulation. With regard to golf courses, there again there was always a difficulty when strangers came down into a country district and wanted to use a common over which the commoners thought they had exclusive control. The Ashdown Golf Links, however, had been situated on the common for many years, and in his opinion they were likely to be there for many years to come. He was not at all sure that some of the complaints raised by the commoners with regard to these links were not like many other similar complaints, simply made to get better terms out of the golf club.

MR. JAMES HOPE (Sheffield, Central) said he intervened because of the speech of the noble Lord the Member for East Marylebone. The noble Lord said he was neither a despot nor a Socialist, and the impression gathered from the definition he gave of his own opinions was that he was an Anarchist. He told them he desired to be subject to no rule or regulation, and he must say that that was quite in keeping with what he knew of the noble Lord's antecedents. Speaking as one of the conservators of Ashdown Forest in Sussex, he was bound to say that the noble Lord showed great restivness and his replies to the correspondence were certainly more facetious than respectful. The noble Lord made a road which he should not have made and the conservators told him that he had no business to do so, and that they were there to protect the forest. The reply they received was that he had every right, and when he had said that the conservators, in common parlance, were "done," because if they had summoned him, he would at once have set up a defence on a point of law and they would have had no power to take the matter to the High Court. He thought the conservators should have the power to sue and be sued. What he would suggest was that the Bill should be read a second time, and then sent to a Select Committee of which the noble Lord should not be a Member and on which he himself should have a seat. He thought that very soon they would come to a scheme which would pass sometime in the ensuing session.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said that no reason had been given for taking this Bill at the present time. All the speeches which he had heard so far from hon. Gentlemen opposite about the Bill, assumed that the lord of the manor was the only person whose interest was concerned. That was not his opinion, from his reading of the definition of "lord of the manor," in Clause 1. That definition included "any person or persons interested in a common which is the subject of a Provisional Order." That, he took it, meant any other commoner than the lord of the manor. He could not claim the extensive experience of commons possessed by the noble lord, or by the hon. Gentleman who had just spoken, but he had known cases where the authoritative representatives of commoners had agreed to a particular way of using a common which had been very much against the wishes of the commoners, and the latter had shown their disapproval by adopting, as a protest, the summary methods just mentioned by the hon. Member for Somerset. Therefore, he did not think they could conclude that because a parish council was in favour of certain regulations for a common, these were approved of by all the commoners. This proved that representation was, as a matter of fact, but a make-shift way of trying to find out what the people wished for. They had seen the evil in larger matters than in the representation on parish councils. It could not be said for one moment that a parish council actually represented the opinion and wishes of the commoners, many of whom probably never voted at a parish council election, took no part in any of its proceedings, and did not know that such an important body existed. The House should be very chary of taking away the rights of the lord of the manor and the commoners, and handing them over body and soul to either the parish council or any other body. This Bill adopted the same principle as other Bills introduced by hon. Gentlemen opposite, of taking away the control from local people and centralising it as far as possible. He was quite surprised that subsection (*b*), Clause 3, did not contain provisions for setting up a commission. That would be in accordance with the usual procedure of Bills emanating from the same quarter, but it went as near as possible to doing it. The Bill had the vice of centralisation common to many Bills of its kind. It gave to the county council the power of directing and overruling the district council, which, as a rule, had a greater knowledge of what was required than the parish council, and had some work to do. Moreover, those who elected the district council usually paid some attention to the choice of their representatives, which was not the case with parish councils. The Bill contained no provision for assessing the compensation to be given, and settling the rights of the lord of the manor, or of the various commoners who came under the definition of "lord of the manor." Perhaps the promoters of the Bill would have something to say upon that point, because it was very obscure. These he regarded as valid objections to the passing of the Second Reading of the Bill that day. He quite agreed that if, as the Solicitor-General had said, this was only a measure to prevent an obstreperous lord of the manor from not allowing the wishes of the commoners to be carried out, he should not vote against it; but it went very much further than that by allowing a parish council to do things which might be quite contrary to the wishes of the commoners, or the majority of them. Commoners were people who liked to be let alone; they did not want other bodies than themselves to deal with the rights which had been theirs from time immemorial. Therefore, he would support the Amendment of the noble Lord, not because he objected to the principle of the Bill as explained by the Solicitor-General, but because it was brought on at a time when it was not expected, and hon. Members had not had sufficient opportunity of making themselves acquainted with its provisions or of giving it adequate discussion.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.) said there was nothing revolutionary in the proposals of the Bill as had been suggested by the hon. and gallant Member for East Down. The whole object of the Bill was to put rural commons on the same footing as Metropolitan commons in regard to the veto of the lord of the manor. He did not understand that any hon. Gentleman opposite took objection to the lord of the manor being over-ruled by the Metropolitan councils, and, therefore, he took it that there had been no grievances in these cases; and there was no reason to anticipate any grievances and difficulties arising from the extension of the right to rural parish councils. Grievances there were when in opposition to the wishes of the great majority of the commoners and of the inhabitants of the district, an obstreperous lord of the manor exercised his veto to prevent a useful regulation being applied to a common. The noble Lord the Member for Thirsk had said that he had no very great faith in parish councils.

VISCOUNT HELMSLEY said that what he had stated was that the commoners had no great faith in the parish councils.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY said that he would not go into that question at the present moment, but as his hon. and learned friend the Solicitor-General had pointed out, there was ample protection to the lord of the manor and the interests of the commoners, inasmuch as a Provisional Order would require the approval of the Board of Agriculture and the sanction of Parliament. Therefore, all interests were thoroughly safeguarded. The Bill was really intended to prevent the abuses of public commons referred to by the hon. Member for Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities, and if that was not the case he would not assent to it. The Bill secured that where the veto of the lord of the manor was over-ruled in the general interest of the public, the lord of the manor would have compensation for any loss he suffered. The question before the House now was whether or not they agreed to the principle of the Bill. If they were agreed on the principle they should give the Bill a Second Reading and send it to a Committee upstairs, where the details would be carefully considered, and fair play would be given to the interests of the lord of the manor or to any alleged legitimate grievances of the commoners. He therefore hoped that as the great majority of the House accepted the principle of the Bill, it would be given a Second Reading.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said that the hon. Baronet the Member for Somerset had failed to understand the effect of the Bill, or he would not have said that it proposed to do for rural commons what had been done for the Metropolitan commons. He (Mr. Stuart Wortley) opposed the Bill because it sought to impose upon the lord of the manor and the local people the will of strangers to the place. That was the vice of the measure. The mover of the Bill had very carefully covered over all facts very necessary to be known. There were three parties interested in the question. In the first place, he supposed the lord of the manor must be alluded to. He knew a common—he supposed it was one which had been referred to in the course of the debate—where the sporting rights of the lord of the manor had been exercised by himself and his friends without any injury to anyone in the neighbourhood. These were just the sort of rights which no compensation could replace. If these rights were taken away, or practically extinguished, no one in the locality would be benefited, but a great many persons would be deprived of their means of livelihood. Then, in the second place, there were the commoners or villagers who should be considered. A majority of two-thirds of them would by no means give the necessary security that the proposed regulation was a good thing. The interests of the minority and of the lord of the manor might be over-ridden by outsiders who wanted to make use of the common. The hon. Gentleman who introduced the Bill wanted to impose his will and get his pleasure at the expense of others. That had been the case in the New Forest as between the claims of a Commons Preservation Society and the rights enjoyed for over a century by the villagers. The third party was the stranger, who in these days was getting to be more powerful than he used to be, or ought to be. He meant the people who came from a distance, and wanted to filch away the rights of the villagers in the use of the common. He would vote against the Second Reading of the Bill.

MR. RAWLINSON said he did not wish to speak in a hostile way of the Bill. With great respect to the Solicitor-General, he begged to differ from him from the point of view that there were more interests involved than the hon. and learned Gentleman had stated. There was a great difference between a country waste and a suburban common, and he could give instances where serious injury had been done to the rights of commoners as well as to the lord of the manor by schemes of the kind proposed in the Bill. The hon. Member who introduced the Bill had told them that there was not the slightest difficulty in understanding it; but there were a great many references to Acts of Parliament which made the proper understanding of the measure an exceedingly difficult matter. He did not wish to oppose the Bill, but he entered his protest against a highly technical and complicated measure such as this being introduced on a Friday afternoon without adequate explanation being given in non-legal language as to the effect of its provisions. The additional difficulty did not occur in this case as in the Bill first discussed that afternoon with reference to Scotland, inasmuch as the Bill only applied to England and Wales.

*MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool) said he would vote for the Second Reading of the Bill, because of its principle, that commons should be regulated as far as possible so that they might be used by the people. He, however, did not agree with many of the details of the Bill, which he thought were too sweeping. He did not see why the sporting rights of the lord of the manor should be interfered with, but he did not object to the regulations of grazing rights and the cutting of timber, if compensation was given.

Colonel LOCKWOOD said he honestly objected to the discussion of a Bill which contained difficult provisions when they had not had an opportunity of considering them. After the speeches which had been made he began to see a little light, and to understand what it was the hon. Members who introduced the measure wanted. They wanted to take away something he had got. He was afraid that the Bill contained that principle in essence. It might be fortunate or unfortunate for him as a lord of the manor to have a veto on proposed regulations for a common.

And, it being Five of the Clock, Mr. Speaker proceeded to interrupt the Business.

Whereupon Mr. Trevelyan rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. Speaker withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS BILL.

Read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

PORT OF LONDON BILL.

Ordered, "That the Petition of the Glasgow Shipowners' Association against the Port of London Bill, presented on 27th May, be referred to the Joint Committee on the Bill."—(*Mr. Younger.*)

POLICE FORCES WEEKLY REST-DAY.

Ordered, "That Mr. Herbert Lewis be discharged from the Select Committee on Police Forces Weekly Rest-day."

Mr. Ashley.

Ordered, "That Mr. Ellis, Mr. Remnant, Mr. Wiles, and Mr. Guy Wilson be added to the Committee."—(*Mr. Joseph Pease.*)

CRICCIETH WATER AND IMPROVEMENT BILL.

Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Selection A); Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Members from Standing Committee A: Mr. Joyce, Mr. Smyth, and Mr. Waldron (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill); Mr. Harrington, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Nannetti, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, Mr. William Redmond, and Mr. Patrick O'Brien; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Housing of the Working Classes (Ireland) Bill): Mr. Sheehy, Mr. Kavanagh, Mr. Hazleton, Mr. James O'Connor, Mr. Charles MacVeigh, Mr. Mooney, Mr. Jeremiah MacVeagh, Mr. Haviland-Burke, and Mr. O'Malley.

Report to lie upon the Table.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 3).

Sir Joseph Compton Rickett reported from the Committee on Group 3 of Railway Bills: That, for the convenience of parties, the Committee had adjourned till Wednesday, 24th June, at Eleven of the Clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

Whereupon Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put, pursuant to Standing Order No. 3.

Adjourned at five minutes after Five o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

Monday, 1*st June*, 1908.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

The LORD CHANCELLOR acquainted the House, That the Clerk of the Parliaments had laid upon the Table the Certificates from the Examiners that the further Standing Orders applicable to the following Bills have been complied with:—Garw and Ogmore Gas; London County Council (General Powers); Wolverhampton Corporation; Doncaster Corporation; Manchester Corporation.

The same were ordered to lie on the Table.

Standing Orders Committee.—Report from, That the Standing Orders not complied with in respect of the petition for the River Wandle Protection Bill ought to be dispensed with, and leave given to introduce the Bill. Read and agreed to.

River Wandle Protection Bill [H.L.].—Presented (pursuant to leave given this day), and read 1ª.

Keighley Corporation Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Metropolitan District Railway Bill [H.L.].—Reported, with Amendments.

Lincoln Corporation Bill.—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

Leeds Corporation Bill.—Reported with Amendments.

Ammanford Urban District Council Water Bill [H.L.].—Leave given to the Select Committee to adjourn over this day, and not to sit to-morrow till Three o'clock.

Llanelly and Burry Port Water Board Bill [H.L.].—Report from the Select Committee, That it is not expedient to proceed further with the Bill.

Barry Railway Bill [H.L.].—Read 3ª, and passed, and sent to the Commons.

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill; Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill; Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill.—Brought from the Commons.

Skegness Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Returned from the Commons agreed to, with Amendments; The said Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Ravensthorpe Urban District Council Bill [H.L.].—Reported from the Select Committee, with Amendments.

St. Marylebone Borough Council (Superannuation) Bill [H.L.].—Commons Amendments considered, and agreed to.

Paisley District Tramways Order Confirmation Bill [H.L.].—A Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Paisley District Tramways—Was presented by the Lord Denman (for the Lord Herschell) (pursuant to the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, Sections 8 and 9); read 1ª, and to be printed. (No. 86.)

Education Board Provisional Orders Confirmation (London) Bill [H.L.].—Read 2ª (according to order).

Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2) Bill (No. 88); Land Drainage Provisional Order Bill (No. 89); Metropolitan Commons Provisional Order Bill (No. 90).—Read 1ª; to be printed, and referred to the Examiners.

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills.—Ordered, That Standing Orders Nos. 92 and 93 be suspended; and that the time for depositing petitions praying to be heard against Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills, also the time for depositing Documents relating to any Order under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which would otherwise expire during the adjournment of the House at Whitsuntide, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

EDUCATION BOARD PROVISIONAL ORDERS CONFIRMATION (CORNWALL, ETC.) BILL [H.L.].

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

On Question, Bill read 2ª.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX, who had given notice to move, in the event of the Bill being read 2ª, that it be an Instruction to the Committee to which the Bill may be referred to strike out the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council Order, said: My Lords, in moving the Motion which stands in my name I desire to detain your Lordships for as short a time as possible. The facts are not disputed, and they are, very shortly, these. The school at East Hardwick has been a Church school for over 250 years. Improvements were required in it by the local education authority, and the Board of Education. It is not denied that the managers submitted plans for these improvements which were considered adequate by the inspector of the Board of Education, and by the inspector of the local education authority. The question of a playground having been raised, the managers, although they had been told by the Board of Education that in the opinion of the Board they could not be required to provide such a playground—and, indeed, if your Lordships were acquainted with the hamlet of East Hardwick you would see how completely unnecessary the playground is—did provide a playground; and not only so, they provided the playground which had been recommended by the inspector of the local education authority.

The plans for these suggested improvements were detained for considerably over a year by the local education authority, and then, though throughout the whole course of the negotiations it had never been once suggested that the premises were such as could not be made sufficient, the local education authority gave notice of their intention to build a new council school. Upon this there was a public meeting of all the ratepayers and inhabitants of East Hardwick to protest against the decision of the local education authority. That meeting was unanimous in its condemnation of the proposal; but, nevertheless, the local education authority persisted in its determination to compel the erection of a new council school, to accommodate sixty children at a cost of £14 a head, making a total of, roughly, £1,000, though thirty is the outside number of children attending the present school, and the erection of such a council school contrary to the wish of every inhabitant of the parish would add 1s. to the existing 8d. education rate. The managers appealed to Mr. McKenna, who refused to upset the decision of the local authority; and I wish to draw your Lordships' attention particularly to the fact that he did not grant a local inquiry, in accordance with his powers, nor consider, as he was bound to do under Section 9 of the Education Act of 1902—first, the interests of secular education, which were amply provided for assuming the school to be altered as the managers were prepared to alter it; secondly, the wishes of the parents, about which there is no dispute; and, thirdly, the economy of the rates, which, as I have explained, are proposed to be raised 1s. in the £ in respect of a school which nobody wants.

Upon the decision of the Board of Education being made known, the managers were enabled, by the generosity of a lady residing in the neighbourhood, to offer to build a new school themselves free of cost to the ratepayers. This offer was refused, and the local education authority were supported in their refusal by the Board of Education, who informed the managers that Mr. McKenna had already decided that it was to be a council school. And, lastly, the feeling against the proposed school in the neighbourhood is so strong that no one in the parish will sell land for its site, and the Board of Education are now proposing to take compulsory power of acquisition. I submit that these facts speak for themselves. No one disputes their accuracy, and, emphasised as they are by the further fact that there is a council school already existing within a mile and a quarter of East Hardwick, I am compelled to say that the only reasonable interpretation that can be put upon them is the determination of the Board of Education and the local education authority between them to squeeze out a Church school at all costs.

As I have said, I am not going to comment on these facts, because I think they require no comment and are stronger left to themselves. But there are two or three questions with regard to them that are very pertinent to the matter and which ought to be asked. I should like to know, if the premises were such as made it impossible to render them satisfactory, which is the excuse now alleged in support of the new council school, why additions and improvements to the school were suggested by the local education authority themselves? Why was it never once suggested that the premises were irremediably unsuitable, and why was all this waste of time and money incurred if they were incapable of improvement? Why did no member of the local education authority go to East Hardwick to inspect the school and see whether it was quite impossible to avoid this great addition to the rates? And then, why did not the authority accept the offer of the managers to erect a school free of expense to the parish? Why was there no local inquiry? Who made the discovery that the present premises could not be rendered satisfactory, and why was it not made before the managers were asked to submit plans for the improvements necessary to make the school efficient?

I am quite aware that it will be said that this Motion is one of an unusual character, and it may be thought a strong thing to refuse leave to a local education authority to purchase land which they say is required. But I submit that the facts of this case are very unusual in themselves, that the action of the Board of Education is no less unusual, and that it is a very strong measure to strain the law in order to take compulsory powers to acquire land for a purpose which is not necessary under the Act. Your Lordships will remember that the noble Lord the President of the Council, whose illness we all so sincerely deplore, admitted that no inquiry had been made as it ought to have been made, and that the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies admitted that this was a very nicely balanced case and that he could not say what his own decision would have been in regard to it. My noble friend added—

> "I should have been in considerable doubt on the subject."

I think it is not too much to say that if the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies had been at the head of the Board of Education, as I devoutly wish he were, the decision would not have been what it was. My noble friend Lord Crewe knows the locality extremely well—in old days he and I have both frequently hunted over it—and I would ask him whether, when a mistake has been made, as I feel sure he thinks is the case here, it is not really better frankly to admit the mistake and remedy it? In this instance I very seriously ask him whether His Majesty's Government will not consent to my Motion that it be an Instruction to the Committee to which the Bill may be referred to strike out the West Riding County Council Order, and allow the East Hardwick managers to carry out their proposals for improving the school to the satisfaction of everyone in the parish and to the great saving of the rates.

I should like, if I may, to give two reasons which I think will incline the noble Earl to agree to my request. I find that in 1871 my noble friend's father, the late Lord Houghton, was active in raising funds to erect a church in place of the old chapel in connection with this trust; and in 1872 the noble Marquess the Lord Privy Seal laid the foundation of this new church with the aid of the Freemasons of the West Riding of Yorkshire Province. I submit that if the late Lord Houghton and my noble friend the Lord Privy Seal were able in 1871 and 1872 to be so friendly to the arrangements connected with this trust, it is not a great thing to ask that they should continue their good offices at the present time. I also find that on 16th May there was published in a local Yorkshire paper called the *Stalwart*—I had not heard of it before, but I rather infer from its name that it is a Liberal paper—a letter from Mr. Runciman, in which he seems to suggest that if a Provisional Order authorising compulsory powers for the acquisition of a site had not been granted and a confirming Bill had not been before Parliament, he might have reopened the question. I do not know if I am right in putting this interpretation on Mr. Runciman's letter, but he certainly mentions the Provisional Order as a reason why he regrets his inability to reopen the question. If His Majesty's Government will agree to my Motion that difficulty will be removed out of Mr. Runciman's path, and he will be able to remedy what has been done and allow the managers of the East Hardwick school to carry out the necessary improvements.

We hear at the present time some talk about a possible compromise on the education question. I do not know whether such a compromise is possible without the sacrifice of essential principles. Certainly it is no business of mine to discuss that question to-day. But I do very seriously say that if any compromise is ever to be arrived at, it certainly will not be promoted by showing such a spirit towards denominational schools as has been shown towards the East Hardwick school. I am told that my noble friend Lord Stanley of Alderley, whose interest in educational affairs is so great, is likely to say that this East Hardwick school was founded by a Nonconformist in 1653 and was stolen by the Church at the Restoration. Well, I should have thought that possession of a school for all these years was a sufficiently good title. But if the noble Lord should use that argument—and I will say something on that point in a moment—all I can s y is that if the wishes of a founder are to be pleaded as a justification for depriving the Church of a school held for over 200 years and putting it into the possession of those who would allow only undenominational teaching to be given in it, then I look forward to obtaining the whole-hearted and complete support of my noble friend against any educational proposal to break the trusts of schools founded within our own memory all over the country, and founded for the giving of denominational instruction. If the argument is good in one case, it is equally good in the other.

But I hasten to relieve my noble friend's mind by telling him that there is really no sort of doubt as to the intentions of the founder of this school. The school was founded in 1653, a critical time in the history of religion in England. It was in that year that the tide of Puritanism reached its flood and the prohibition of every kind of Church teaching took a form so excessive that it created a reaction; and no Churchman at heart dared at that time endow a school in connection with the Church of England. In the absence of absolute knowledge it is impossible to say what the private opinion of the founder was, but there is the strongest reason to believe that he was a Churchman. What makes it nearly certain that this was the case is that in his will he provides for a convenient chapel and free school in East Hardwick, and calls the minister of the chapel a "preaching schoolmaster." I have looked carefully into the matter, and there is not a single case of a free school being founded by a Nonconformist in the seventeenth century. If so, it is quite clear what the opinions of the founder were; and I can only say that the present action of the Board of Education in trying to take away this school from those who have enjoyed it for 250 years is extremely like the action of the earlier Nonconformists, who very much preferred using schools provided by other people to providing them for themselves. I ask His Majesty's Government whether they cannot agree to my Motion and disallow so much of the Bill as takes compulsory powers for the erection of this new school, and so avoid inflicting a very great hardship on a small parish, composed of working people who are strongly opposed to the action of the local education authority.

Moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee to which the Bill may be referred to strike out the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council Order."—(*Viscount Halifax.*)

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (The Earl of CREWE): My Lords, we must all heartily recognise the exceedingly moderate and genial manner in which my noble friend opposite has introduced this question to your Lordships' notice for a second time. These cases are undoubtedly among the most difficult which fall within the purview of the Board of Education. You have, on the one hand, a powerful, energetic, and modern-minded local authority, very largely concerned with urban schools of the most approved type; and, on the other hand, a little old parish school which, as I think appeared from all the facts which came out when we had this question before us the other day, was not in its general arrangements in full accord with modern notions of what an elementary school should be.

After a great deal of correspondence and investigation, the matter came before the Board of Education, and what the Board had to decide was not whether the managers ought to be given a chance of repairing the school or of making various changes in it, but whether, if that was done, the school would be permanently, or for a considerable time ahead, of a thoroughly satisfactory character; because it clearly would not be fair to the managers themselves to allow them to spend money on making improvements it there was a risk that in a few years time the school might again be brought up before the Board of Education and possibly condemned. The local education authority had come to the conclusion that the premises could not be made satisfactory, and the Board of Education supported them in that view. They, therefore, under Section 9 of the Act of 1902, declared that a new school was necessary, and in doing so the Board was undoubtedly impressed by the first of the three considerations which have to be taken into account—namely, the interests of secular education; that is to say, broadly speaking, the provision of a thoroughly satisfactory elementary school. In the opinion of my right hon. friend that was the paramount and governing consideration.

The noble Viscount almost seemed to imply—and this, I think, was the only inaccuracy with which I am bound to tax him—that, all through, the managers, or somebody on their behalf, was willing to erect a new voluntary school in place of the old building. That is not so. As a matter of fact, the Board's decision was given on the 18th May, 1907, and certainly up to that time not a whisper had ever reached the Board of Education as to the possibility of a new school being provided. What did happen was that in the following August the vicar of the parish came to the Board of Education and suggested that the managers would build a new school; but nothing more followed. The decision of the Board had been given, and the matter proceeded no further. I do not know that the denominational question as regards the wishes of the parents is very strong in this case, either one way or the other. In any case, the Board of Education have no reason to suppose that it is; but undoubtedly the third consideration, that of the economy of the rates, is a very strong argument, and it is one which the parish have an undoubted title to press. A penny rate in this parish produces only a very small sum, and there is no doubt that the provision of a new council school would represent a very heavy burden on that small community. I do not think it is fair to tax the Board of Education with having had anything whatever in view but the interests of education, and it certainly is not the case that they failed to take great trouble in investigating the matter. Their inspectors made personal inquiry, with the result which we know.

Now I quite admit that it does seem somewhat absurd, if you like, and rather in the nature of cracking a nut with a steam hammer, to apply compulsory powers in a matter of this kind; but the House must remember that when once the Board of Education had decided that a new school was necessary, they either had to ask for these compulsory powers or to do nothing and practically leave the whole matter at the complete option of the managers. I am quite sure that the noble Marquess opposite, Lord Londonderry, will agree that, speaking generally, it is a very unusual and a very undesirable thing for the Board of Education to reverse a decision which has been arrived at under Section 9. There, I am sure, I shall have the general concurrence of the noble Marquess. As the matter stands, the Board of Education, supposing the noble Viscount's Motion were carried, would find themselves in the position of having to choose between the continuance of a school which they regard as unsatisfactory, or closing it, and, land being unobtainable, leaving the children of the parish without any school at all. That is the position.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: They could have the new school.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: I am coming to that.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: The improvements which have been already said to be adequate could easily be carried out in the course of the holidays.

*THE EARL OF CREWE: The improvements have not been said to be adequate. The Board of Education have said that no improvements which the managers could effect would make the school a permanently satisfactory school. Consequently, therefore, the Board are placed in that dilemma. The question is, is there any way out of that difficulty? A possible way out of the difficulty appears to me to be this. If it is true that the managers, or somebody on their behalf, is willing to provide a new school, that would be a new fact, which I think, would justify the Board of Education in reconsidering the decision they came to under Section 9. I have very little doubt that my right hon. friend would be prepared to consider the matter in that light; but it would only be on an understanding of that kind that I think my right hon. friend would be disposed to review the decision arrived at by the Board. That offer was not made—I wish that to be quite clear—before the decision of the Board was reached, and, therefore, it would be an entirely new fact which my right hon. friend would, I think, be disposed to take into consideration. Whether the noble Viscount is able, I will not say, to enter into any engagement, but to hold out any hopes of that being done, of course I am not in a position to say; but, if it were so, I should not be inclined to oppose the Motion which my noble friend has proposed.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: The noble Earl will quite understand that it is impossible for me now to state if the offer to build a new school still holds good. But I am obliged to say that all the reasons the noble Earl has alleged for the action of the Board of Education are entirely disposed of by the fact that when the offer was made to them to build a new school they refused it.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, what has just been said by the noble Viscount is, I suppose, all that we could have reasonably expected him to say. He is not, of course, in a position to make a legally binding offer, but I was under the impression, after what passed at the last discussion, that the offer was still open.

VISCOUNT HALIFAX: I have no information on that subject. All I know is that a definite offer was made to the local education authority and refused.

THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: Seeing that the offer has not been withdrawn, the proper course would be to postpone the decision until the point could be cleared up. If the offer made has been withdrawn, then the matter stands in a very different position from that occupied a few weeks ago. I hope the matter will be postponed until the wish of the generous donor can be known.

LORD FITZMAURICE: My Lords, may I be allowed to make a suggestion to the noble Viscount which will, I trust, bring agreement? I would point out that, if the noble Viscount insists upon his Amendment striking out a part of this omnibus Bill, he will defeat his own object, which is to obtain a solution satisfactory to the parish and also one that would have general approval. If he takes advantage of his position and the serried battalions which, I think, on this occasion he commands and strikes out this particular proposal, I think he will he taking a very strong and drastic course when a milder one would equally serve his purpose. If, on the other hand, the Bill is allowed to go upstairs—and I presume the procedure in regard to a Provisional Order Bill in your Lordships' House is very similar to what it is in the House of Commons, with whose procedure, I confess, I have hitherto been more familiar—it can be altered after consideration in a judicious and judicial spirit free from misunderstandings which have embittered the controversy in the House. I was not present when the matter was discussed the other evening, but I have read the debate, and I find that the noble Viscount said there had been a definite rejection of the offer to build a new school. As far as I can make out from the papers at the Board of Education, which I have had the advantage of reading, the vicar of the parish made an observation, apparently not of a representative kind, with regard to a new school. He said something of this kind—

> "Well, if you finally reject the offer of these improvements we shall have to build a new school."

That is not what anybody would call a "firm" offer; and I cannot make out that until the debate the other evening there had been anything that amounted to what may be called an offer on the part of this parish to build a new school, and still less a rejection of the offer on the part of the Board of Education.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: My Lords, I am very glad indeed to note the more conciliatory attitude taken by the noble Earl the Secretary of State for the Colonies than that in which the matter was treated on the part of the Government when attention was last called to it. I believe, with the noble Viscount, that had Lord Crewe been President of the Board of Education he would have recognised the justice of this case. The noble Earl is now divided between his sympathy with the views put forward by the noble Viscount and his loyal desire to support his colleague; and I cannot blame him for that. But the point is that when the offer was made it was peremptorily rejected.

THE EARL OF CREWE: Not by the Board of Education.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: Why was that offer made? It was made because the Board of Education declined to accept the report of their own architect in approval of the plans and proposals submitted by the managers of this school. Why has that report been ignored as well as the report of the architect of the local education authority? I do not wish to say anything of a controversial character when we have been met in such a conciliatory spirit, but with the regard and affection which noble Lords in this House have for denominational education, this is a matter that cannot pass unnoticed or without remonstrance. There has, undoubtedly, been a considerable amount of correspondence between the Board of Education, the local education authority, and the managers of the East Hardwick School; and I think that before we arrive at any decision your Lordships should have the right to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the whole of the correspondence. I think we are entitled to ask that the correspondence should be laid on the Table. The local education authority is known to be hostile to denominational schools, and, without wishing to say anything disrespectful, it cannot be denied that the President of the Board of Education has shown no love for them. It does not seem unreasonable, in the circumstances, that the House should postpone a decision until your Lordships have had an opportunity of reading such correspondence on this subject as can be published. Reference has been made to the points on which I put a Question the other day to the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. I asked whether the Board of Education were acting legally in ignoring the provisions of Section 9 of the Act of 1902. Certainly they are ignoring the spirit of that Act when they propose to saddle a parish with an additional 1s. rate to build a school which is not required and which is strongly objected to. As it does not appear possible for the noble Viscount to give a definite answer to-day as to this offer, I think the question might be postponed, and that in the meantime we might have the Papers laid on the Table. This is an unusual course to take on a Bill of this kind, but the circumstances are unusual.

LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: My Lords, I would give a word of advice to the noble Viscount opposite never to make a speech for anyone else in anticipation, because I have no intention whatever of saying anything in regard to the history of the seventeenth century into which he entered. After the sepeches we have heard, surely the House is very near to a settlement of this question, and I rise to support strongly the suggestion of the most rev. Primate that this matter should stand over. We are on the eve of the Whitsuntide holidays, and I do not suppose anything very serious will happen if the sending of this Bill to a Select Committee is postponed until the House reassembles. That will give a fortnight in which the necessary investigations can be made. With regard to the point raised by the noble Marquess who has just sat down, if the matter is going to be settled by a compromise the presentation of Papers is not urgent, though they might be moved for later as an independent historical document. As I rise to plead for a postponement in order that the matter may be settled in a harmonious way, I think that is a good reason why I should not touch upon any of the matters of fact, or alleged fact, which have been brought forward in this debate. Therefore, I do not wish to go into any of the disputed facts. But I would urge that as we are so near a settlement the matter should stand over.

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, I only rise to say that the course which my noble friend opposite has just proposed seems to us to be an eminently reasonable one. I do not think that after the conversation which has taken place it would be fair to expect that we should send the Bill as it now stands to a Committee upstairs. Noble Lords opposite will remember that we took exception to the manner in which this case had been treated by the Board of Education, not only for the reason that the munificent offer made by this lady had not been accepted, but for a good many other reasons. In our view the conduct of the Board of Education throughout this transaction has been what I can only describe as of a very aggressive character. I have no desire, however, to press that at present, because we now have it from the noble Earl opposite that if the offer made by this lady was a firm offer and if my noble friend is in a position by-and-bye to say that the offer still stands, the Board of Education will be prepared to entertain it. My noble friend very naturally is not able this evening to say whether the offer still holds good. In these circumstances we think it would be a reasonable course to adjourn the discussion until after the holidays, when, no doubt, my noble friend will be able to tell the House whether the solution proposed is still open to us.

LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate. Nothing will be lost by it, and when we resume in a fortnight's time we shall be in a better position to discuss the matter.

Moved, "That the debate be adjourned."—(*Lord Heneage*).

On Question,

Debate adjourned accordingly.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

COLONIES: ANNUAL.

No. 557. East Africa Protectorate (Report for 1906–1907).

No. 558. Uganda (Report for 1906–1907).

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

Correspondence relating to the tenure of land in the East Africa Protectorate.

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY.

Fifty-first Annual Report of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery, 1907–1908.

FISHERIES (SCOTLAND).

Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1907. Part I. General Report.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Annual Report of proceedings under the Tithe Acts, 1836 to 1891, the Copyhold Act, 1894, the Inclosure Acts, 1845 to 1899, the Agricultural Holdings Acts, 1883 to 1900, the Drainage and Improvement of Land Acts, the Universities and College Estates Acts, 1858 to 1898, the Glebe Lands Act, 1888, and certain other Acts, for the year 1907.

BELFAST HEALTH COMMISSION.

Report to the Local Government Board for Ireland.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS (IRELAND).

Report and tables relating to Irish Agricultural Labourers, for the year 1907–1908.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION (IRELAND).

Report on the trade in imports and exports at Irish ports for the year ended 31st December, 1906.

Presented (by command), and ordered to lie on the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF WESTMORLAND).

Order made by the council of the county of Westmorland altering certain polling districts in the two Parliamentary Divisions of the county.

PATENTS, DESIGNS, AND TRADE MARKS.

Twenty-fifth Report of the Comptroller-General of patents, designs, and trade marks, with appendix for the year 1907.

Laid before the House (pursuant to Act), and ordered to lie on the Table.

THE NAVAL CONFERENCE.

LORD REAY: My Lords, I wish to ask my noble friend who represents the Foreign Office a Question of which I have given him private notice—namely, whether he can inform the House when the further Report relating to the Peace Conference at the Hague will be laid on the Table, and whether the invitations to the proposed Naval Conference on International Maritime Law have been issued.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (LORD FITZMAURICE): My Lords, in regard to the first part of my noble friend's Question I am glad to be able to inform the House that the further Papers which, in reply to my noble friend Lord Eversley, I stated that I hoped before long it would be possible to lay, are now practically ready and will be in the hands of Parliament almost immediately. In regard to the further Question which my noble friend has asked, as to whether the invitations to the proposed Naval Conference have been issued, the reply is in the affirmative. The desire of His Majesty's Government is to discuss certain points on which it is essential for us that we should have an agreement with the chief naval Powers before ratifying the Convention relating to Prize Courts, which was one of the results of the Hague Conference. The most important of those points, as your Lordships are aware, are the rules relating to blockade and contraband. The capture of private property at sea is not included. I cannot say what subjects other Powers may desire to raise, but it is desirable that the discussion should be concentrated on points like blockade and contraband, which are strictly germane to the proposed Prize Court Convention.

THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH rose to call attention to the position of County Associations in connection with the raising of the scientific arms of the Territorial Force. The noble Earl said: My Lords, my reason for placing this notice on the Paper is that during the course of the debate which took place the other night on the initiative of my noble friend Lord Denbigh, those representing the County Associations had no opportunity of expressing an opinion. That debate took the form of an artillery duel between artillery experts on the one side and the Government on the other. Those who listened to that debate, especially noble Lords interested in raising the troops of the Territorial Force, must have heard the speeches of the noble and gallant Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, and of the noble Earl Lord Denbigh, with feelings of apprehension, and certainly the answer that was given by the noble Lord who represents the War Office in this House was not very reassuring. But one thing we did learn—namely, that the original scheme as proposed by the Secretary of State for War would be adhered to under any circumstances, and that there was no alternative possible. There have been many debates on this question of the Territorial Force, and one is rather tempted to ask of what use those debates are if it is impossible to make any alteration.

In addition to the condemnation in debate, there was a letter in the Press the other day from Colonel Lonsdale Hale, who joined in the cry against the Territorial Artillery, and said he would undertake to fill any hall in the United Kingdom with military experts opposed to the proposal of His Majesty's Government. Well, I think he might have gone further and undertaken to have filled any hall in the country with military experts opposed to any scheme of military reform that ever has been or could be devised. My noble friend Lord Newton went a good deal further the other day than Lord Roberts, and condemned the whole scheme of the Territorial Army root and branch.

LORD NEWTON: Hear, hear.

*THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: The noble Lord expressed an opinion upon the old Volunteers, and I am not sure that his opinion regarding the Volunteers has always been the same. We all know what he wants, and if this scheme fails he will very likely get what he wants. The noble Lord made a comparison between the old Volunteers and the Territorial Force as it at present exists, but I do not think such a comparison was fair, seeing that the time has not yet definitely arrived when the ranks of the Territorial Force have to be filled. There are, as we know, a great many differences under the new system which may or may not prevent a number of old Volunteers from rejoining, but I do not think the progress we have made in the raising of the necessary troops is at all one to cause discouragement.

In the views he expressed the other night, Lord Roberts represented the Regular Artillery. We had at the same time the opinion of Lord Denbigh, who has not only had a good deal of experience as a Regular artilleryman, but is in command of the Honourable Artillery Company, which is often quoted as proof of what Territorial Artillery might be. Against that evidence we had quoted to us the remarks of the Military Correspondent of *The Times* as a complete answer to the criticisms of Lord Roberts. I venture to say that that was no answer at all. It was merely the expression of another opinion. Lord Roberts has given one opinion, and the Military Correspondent of *The Times* has given another; and I think nine people out of ten will look upon the opinion of Lord Roberts as far more valuable than that of the Military Correspondent of *The Times* on matters connected with the Artillery. But, after all, it is expert opinion; and we know very well from our experience of Committees upstairs that when there is a scientific or technical question involved each side brings forward a certain number of expert witnesses. If one side brings forward three the other invariably calls four, and the result usually is that it is one of the expert witnesses who gives the case away.

I regret that Lord Denbigh's proposal to stiffen the Territorial Artillery with a Regular battery in each brigade was not considered. The noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for War said it was perfectly simple, if you could raise two efficient batteries, to raise three. That is not the case. The great difficulty in the way of the Territorial Artillery is the lack of a Regular battery to show them what is wanted, and if you could stiffen these brigades of Territorial Artillery by having in each a Regular battery it would be of enormous advantage to the whole corps. The Regular battery would set a high standard, and there would be great competition among the amateur batteries to get as near as possible to that standard. On the question of the disappearance of certain batteries of Regular Artillery, I confess that I am in rather a difficulty. There has been a heated, and perhaps not very edifying, correspondence in *The Times* between Mr. Arnold-Forster and *The Times* Military Correspondent. The charge, I think, was in the first place made by Mr. Arnold-Forster that under the present scheme thirty-three batteries were to be done away with. The retort was that the only man who had abolished a battery of Regular Artillery was Mr. Arnold-Forster, and he replied that that brigade was not lost but had gone before and was really merged into others, and while each side accuses the other of reducing batteries of Artillery, each side claims that under their own system the Artillery has been stronger, both as regards men and efficiency than ever before.

The noble Lord the Under-Secretary stated that under the present system the Regular Artillery would be short by 7,000 men on mobilisation, and that this shortage would be after stripping the thirty-three surplus batteries and returning the guns to store. What I suggest is that an easy method of averting shortage of men on mobilisation is to stiffen and strengthen the Territorial Artillery by a sort of nucleus battery. Lord Roberts, in the course of his remarks the other evening, expressed reluctance to place any difficulties in the way of the Secretary of State. I do not think he need have any fear of that, because as regards the raising of these troops the whole of the difficulties have been placed on the shoulders of the County Associations, due to absolute unpreparedness of administration after two years of incubation, hurry in the formation of the County Associations, and the contradictory orders we are always getting. I really begin to doubt whether the whole of the staff at the War Office are favourable to this scheme. They do not appear to me to do very much to help us out of our difficulties, and I would suggest that it should be clearly understood that with regard to military matters we should be under the general officer commanding in each division and that we of the County Association should be responsible for the civilian side, and we might drop the War Office out of the matter altogether.

I also have to complain of the meagre assistance afforded by the War Office for the instruction of the artillery and engineering branches of the Territorial Force. Surely those who have taken so much trouble to make each county scheme a success should at least get that amount of assistance in the way of instructors necessary to teach the men. In addition to the sergeant-instructors, there is a certain amount of *materiel* which is absolutely necessary and which ought to be supplied to the various scientific arms at the moment of recognition. We have six batteries to raise. They are all recognised and two are complete, but we have only two guns. I maintain that we should have for each battery that is recognised two guns with four sets of appointments. With regard to the engineering branch, we have three field companies either recognised or ready to be recognised, and they are absolutely without any of the necessary equipment. The same applies to the brigade company of the Army Service corps and the mounted brigade of field ambulance. I think that recognition ought not to be looked upon as an empty compliment, but that we should be given what is really necessary to enable the instructors to teach the men in the scientific branches of the Territorial Force.

There is another point which has exercised my mind. It is not for the County Associations to express any opinion as to what is necessary in regard to the Regular Army. That, of course, is a matter entirely for the military authorities. But there is an idea abroad that the Government intend gradually to reduce the Regular Army and to fill its place with the Territorial Force. The County Associations have put their hands to the difficult task of raising the Territorial Force on the distinct understanding that it was to be a second line army, and quite supplementary to the Regular Army. If there is any question of that force ever taking the place of the Regular Army we ought to be told so at once. We are perfectly willing to supplement the Regular Army but not to supplant it. I would urge my noble friend to do what he can to help us in our present difficulties, and I can assure him that the County Associations to-day, what with the activity of the critics on the one hand and the inaction of the War Office on the other, are in the position of being between the devil and the deep sea.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Lord LUCAS): My Lords, I should like first of all to say that the Army Council owe a great debt of gratitude to Lord Dartmouth for the energy he has thrown into the work of the Staffordshire County Association. We admit that there have been difficulties. As the situation was a new one and as we had little to guide us from the experience of the past, difficulties were inevitable and mistakes were bound to be made; but we have always been ready to rectify them immediately our attention has been called to them. As quickly as the guns are converted—and the conversion was begun very soon after the Act of last year became law—they are being distributed among the batteries of the Territorial Force. The noble Earl referred to the difficulty experienced in finding the means of instructing the men when they had been recruited. Equally difficult has been the question of supplying them at once with permanent staff, and on this matter I would beg for a certain amount of forbearance on the part of the County Associations. The lack of instructors for the batteries is due to the fact that the Artillery of the Regular Army is about to go on its annual training, and the non-commissioned officers intended as instructors cannot at present be withdrawn without destroying a certain part of the year's work, with the result that the batteries would inevitably suffer in efficiency. I can assure the noble Earl that the War Office is really doing its very best to meet the new situation. The noble Earl says the County Associations have been harassed by the number of circulars that have been sent out.

*THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: Contradictory circulars.

LORD LUCAS: The different circulars sent by the War Office to the County Associations are not so much contradictory as developments and elaborations of previous instructions, and are due to special cases brought to the notice of the Army Council by County Associations, to which the original rules that had been laid down could not apply. The circulars that have been sent out have invariably been the outcome of Associations writing to us for instructions. The noble Earl expressed the position quite correctly when he said that the general officer commanding is the authority on purely military questions, and that the County Association is the authority on administrative questions. The County Association, of course, is responsible to the War Office for the way in which it spends its money, but otherwise it is free so long as it keeps within the expenditure and as long as there is nothing questionable in the way in which the funds are administered. For instance, if they spent an inordinate amount on matters which could not be considered of first-rate importance whilst neglecting matters of greater importance, there would come the day of reckoning at the end of the year.

It is the desire of the Army Council to encourage the County Associations to manage their own affairs as much as possible. We do not wish to interfere more than we can possibly help; but while the thing is absolutely in its infancy we have had to send advice and counsel occasionally to the County Associations. I can only say that the Army Council no more like sending out circulars than the County Associations like receiving them, and as soon as the County Associations are fully cognisant of the conditions of their work that sort of thing will cease. In some cases the County Associations resent the letters sent them from the War Office; but, on the other hand, many Associations have returned grateful thanks for the information they have received and which has been of great use to them.

As to the position of the Territorial Force, to which the noble Earl referred, we have always laid down that the Territorial Force is bound to be a Second-Line Army, and that it can never replace the Regular Army as the Force which is required instantly on the outbreak of war. I qualify that only by the statement that there is a clause in the Act which provides that certain members of the Territorial Force, not properly considered as combatant members, may, if they like, take on an engagement to serve with the Regular Army. That applies to such men as doctors. But our view has always been that the combatant arms of the Territorial Force, under peace conditions, cannot be made fit to take their places in the field against trained troops on the outbreak of war without a certain amount of training on mobilisation. Therefore no one, I think, would agree more readily than we should that it is out of the question for the Territorial Army to be regarded as replacing the Regular Army.

*THE EARL OF DARTMOUTH: I did not mean to press the case of the

Staffordshire County Association unduly. It is the one that I happen to know most about, and as it was very likely that the difficulties which had arisen in our case had also arisen in others, I took Staffordshire merely as an illustration. I did not wish to make any complaint against the War Office on account of the number of their letters, because I have had communications at the War Office for sometime now which have not yet been answered. I quite understand the difficulty about the guns, but surely there is no such difficulty in supplying the various scientific arms of the force with the necessary equipment for instruction. Surely those should be supplied immediately the unit is recognised.

*LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I think my noble friend may be very well satisfied with having raised this debate, and I am sure all the Associations in the same group with him will be obliged to him for having done so. I think we ought to take note of what the noble Lord the Under-Secretary has just said. It has now been authoritatively laid down as clearly as can be that while in military matters the commanding officers of districts are responsible, for everything connected with administration and financial affairs the Associations are free and unfettered to manage their own affairs without the interference of the clerks or of the staff at the War Office.

We have no complaint whatever to make against the Secretary of State for War or against my noble friend the Under-Secretary. So far as I can speak as a chairman of a County Association. they have done everything they can to assist us, to give us the very best advice, and to take into consideration any suggestions that have been made either formally or informally. But I have not been four months at work with my Association without having formed a very distinct opinion that the very worst friends the Secretary of State for War has got are in his own household. My noble friend, Lord Lucas, said just now that we had asked for information. Yes, for information on practical points; but we have waited for the answers. We have, however, been inundated with circular after circular on matters with which the War Office had nothing to do, if my noble friend's statement is right that we have to work out our own salvation. Early in the development of the Associations the War Office interfered with us with regard to the salaries of our secretaries and secretariat. They had no right whatever to send us a single line about that. It was clearly laid down in the twenty-first Article of Association that when the recommendation of the Secretary had been agreed to we had entire power as to what we were to pay. Eventually the War Office had to give way.

Take another instance—that of the calling in of the clothing. We had several contradictory circulars with regard to that. First we were told that we were to call in the clothing to headquarters; next that we were not to call it in but that it might be valued from the books. Very soon afterwards we received circulars from the military authorities to say we were to call in the clothing, and they knew nothing whatever about the other circular that had reached us. I could mention a dozen cases or more in which circulars have been sent out and then altered or withdrawn. I will give the most recent one. Only the other day the War Office sent out a circular to say that we were not to pay our markers. Our Association directed the commanding officers to go on as before, and said they would certainly be paid. Then down came an order to the commanding officers that they were not to pay the markers. I was asked what was to be done, and I replied, "Telegraph to the officers that they are not to obey it. I will be responsible for the money." Two days afterwards I received a circular from the War Office saying that they had recalled this order and that the markers were to be paid. I mention this to show my noble friend Lord Dartmouth is quite right when he speaks of contradictory circulars. If Mr. Haldane could only keep the War Office quiet, the practical men on the County Associations would be able to get to work. I think that if half of the clerks at the War Office were sent on a voyage round the world for the next six months it would be very much better for the Territorial Army.

LORD LUCAS: May I be allowed to reply to one or two points raised by Lord Heneage? I am extremely sorry if anything I said, in my reply to Lord Dartmouth, could by any possibility be made to convey any reflection whatever upon the War Office staff.

LORD HENEAGE: No, no.

LORD LUCAS: Nothing could have been better than the way in which they have worked. Many of them have worked for months together not getting away from the office until late, dealing with an overwhelming mass of detail. As to the contradictory circulars referred to by Lord Heneage, probably the larger proportion of these were sent out because of letters received from the noble Lord himself.

LORD HENEAGE: I asked for information. I did not ask for circulars, though I did ask very peremptorily for the withdrawal of a good many of them.

LORD LUCAS: The noble Lord asked for information on many points on which, I admit, information was required. The information was sent to the noble Lord, and then, as other County Associations were in similar difficulties, the information was embodied in a circular and sent all round. It was only in our struggles to satisfy the questions and claims of the different Associations that we had sometimes to alter or recall our previous circulars; but in no instance have we ever made an alteration in any instruction or circular which has not been to the advantage of the County Associations.

POST OFFICE SITES BILL [H.L.].

Read 2^a (according to order).

COMPANIES BILL [H.L.]

[SECOND READING.]

Order of the Day for the Second Reading read.

LORD HAMILTON OF DALZELL: My Lords, this is a very short Bill consisting of a single clause. Its object is to remove certain restrictions upon the holding of land by colonial companies in this country, to which restrictions those companies are at present liable under the Mortmain Acts. The Statute of Mortmain recalls one's early studies of English history, and I think a great many people would be surprised, as I confess I was, to find that that Statute was still in force. But it is in force, and it is still illegal for any corporate body to hold land in this country unless it has first taken out a licence in Mortmain or unless there is a statutory exemption from the provisions of the Mortmain Acts. Those statutory exemptions are given, in the first place, by the Companies Act of 1862, and, in the case of statutory companies, by a clause which is invariably inserted in the special Act of Parliament under which those companies are formed. Those exemptions are operative in the case of companies registered in this country, but they do not exempt companies registered in any of the British Possessions. In the case of those companies a licence in Mortmain must be taken out from the Secretary of State for the Home Department, at a cost of £70, in the case of every piece of land which it is desired to acquire. That restriction has been found to be very harsh in the case of certain colonial companies, such as insurance and banking companies, carrying on business in this country, and it is thought that it should be removed. What it is proposed by this Bill to do is to place those colonial companies on exactly the same footing in regard to this matter as that upon which British companies now stand I feel sure that this is a proposal which will commend itself to your Lordships, all the more so when I am able to state that there are no similar restrictions in the case of British companies which desire to hold lands in the Colonies. I beg to move.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2^a."—(*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell.*)

On Question, Bill read 2^a, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday, the 16th instant.

AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS BILL [H.L.].

Order of the Day for the Third Reading read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª."—(*Earl Carrington*)

On Question, Bill read 3ª.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Earl CARRINGTON): My Lords, I have to ask the House to agree to two formal Amendments suggested by my noble friend, Lord Onslow. The first is in Clause 47, to add, after the words—

> "Except as otherwise expressly provided by this Act, the compensation in respect of an improvement made or begun before the commencement of this Act, or made upon a holding held under a contract of tenancy,

the words—

> "Other than a tenancy from year to year."

And the second Amendment is to leave out Subsection (2) of Clause 48, namely—

> "(2) The expression 'tenancy current on' a specified date shall include a tenancy from year to year current at that date."

Amendment moved.—

> "In Clause 47, page 21, line 33, after the word 'tenancy,' to insert the words 'other than a tenancy from year to year.'"—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved—

> "In Clause 48, page 22, lines 39 and 40, to leave out Subsection (2).—(*Earl Carrington.*)

On Question, Amendment agreed to.

Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

SMALL HOLDINGS AND ALLOTMENTS BILL [H.L.].

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

THE SPECIAL RESERVE.

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War: (1) If he will be able to lay upon the Table of the House at any early date after the adjournment for Whitsuntide the Return which was promised on the 5th May comparing the results of recruiting for the Special Reserve during the first four months in 1908, with the results of recruiting for the Militia in a similar period in 1907; (2) How is it intended to employ the services of Militiamen who elect to remain in that force until time-expired in event of embodiment. The Militia will have disappeared, and I am rather puzzled how to explain to the men under my command the nature of their service in a force which has become non-existent.

LORD LUCAS: My Lords, I am sorry we have not yet been able to lay the Return for which the noble Duke asks, but it is practically ready and I can promise it to him immediately after Whitsuntide. As to the second question, in the event of embodiment, I take it that if their services were urgently required they would be attached for the time to the unit most closely resembling the unit of which they were members as Militiamen. Of course, they could not be sent abroad unless they volunteered to go.

*THE DUKE OF BEDFORD: I would point out that such a proceeding would be against the Militia Act of 1882, and that is where my difficulty arises. The Act says that you must not—

> "Authorise a Militiaman when belonging to one corps to be transferred without his consent to another corps; or where the corps of a Militiaman includes any battalion or other body of the Regular Forces, authorise him to be posted without his consent to that battalion or body."

Section 5 of the Militia Act provides that—

> "Where a Militiaman was enlisted or re-engaged before the date of any Order or Regulation under this Act, nothing in such Order or Regulation shall render him liable without his consent to be appointed, transferred, or attached to any military body to which he could not without his consent have been appointed, transferred, or attached if the said Order or Regulation had not been made."

I think the noble Lord will see the difficulty in which we are placed.

LORD LUCAS: I think the passages quoted by the noble Duke refer to peace time, and not to embodiment in time of war.

THE TERRITORIAL ARMY.

LORD RAGLAN: My Lords, I rise to ask the Under-Secretary of State for War: (1) The number of officers required for the Territorial Army, excluding the Yeomanry; (2) The number of officers who have transferred from the Volunteers to the Territorial Army; (3) The number of officers now serving as Volunteer officers; (4) Excluding the Yeomanry, on 1st May 8,520 men had transferred to the Territorial Army for four years, and 72,179 men for the period of one year only, with the right to claim a free discharge at the end of twelve months. Will the 72,179 men who have transferred to the Territorial Army on the understanding that they can claim a free discharge at the end of twelve months be held to serve for an extra year in the event of the Territorial Force being embodied; (5) The number of recruits who have joined the Territorial Army since the date of its formation; (6) The number of officers and men, including Yeomanry, wanted to complete the establishment of the Territorial Force; (7) What is meant by not allowing a Volunteer unit to transfer to the Territorial Army unless it has enlisted 30 per cent. of the required establishment? The required establishment of an Infantry battalion of the Territorial Army is 1,000 men. Is a Volunteer battalion, therefore, required to transfer 300 men to the Territorial Army before being counted as a unit of the Territorial Army? (8) In the case of a Volunteer battalion with an establishment of 600 men and a strength of 300 men, would every man serving be required to transfer to the Territorial Army before the battalion was counted as a Territorial unit, or would 30 per cent. of the men serving, that is to say ninety men, or less than 10 per cent. of the required establishment of a Territorial battalion, be accepted as sufficient to justify the transfer? (9) In leaflet No. 2, issued by the War Office, and setting forth the terms of service in the Territorial Force, it is stated that—

> "The Territorial soldier is entitled to pay at army rates, including the extra emoluments paid by certain corps while in camp. He does not draw the threepence a day messing allowance given to the Regular Army, but a daily allowance of 1s. would be paid to his commanding officer to improve his messing."

Will the extra emoluments referred to, and a daily allowance of 1s. be continued to the Territorial soldier when called out on permanent service, or will the pay and allowances of the Territorial soldier during embodiment be precisely the same as those given to the corresponding branches in the Regular Army? (10) Is it the fact that between 4th April and the present date 208 officers have resigned their commissions in the Volunteers? and (11) What was the percentage of men under twenty years of age in the Volunteer force according to the last annual return, and may not a similar percentage be accepted as true of the Territorial Force?

Lord LUCAS: My Lords, in answer to the first Question, the total number of officers required for the Territorial Army, excluding the Yeomanry, is 10,578. As to the second Question, I am sorry I cannot at the moment give the noble Lord the information he requires. We have not yet been able to make up the numbers. I am not quite clear what the noble Lord means by this third Question. I take it that he wants the number of officers who are still holding their commissions as Volunteers officers, not counting those who have transferred but deducting all those who have resigned. That number is 8,543. In regard to the fourth Question, the noble Lord will find that Question 15 (*d*) on the attestation paper makes it clear that the 72,179 men to whom he refers may be required to prolong their service for a further period not exceeding twelve months in the event of the force being embodied. As to the fifth Question, the number of recruits of all arms who had joined the Territorial Army up to 1st May, which is the latest date to which we have the figures, was 4,936. I cannot give the noble Lord the number of officers in reply to his sixth Question, but the number of non-commissioned officers and men wanted to complete the establishment of the Territorial Force on 1st May was 193,790 of all arms. With regard to the seventh Question, 30 per cent. of the establishment is laid down in the Army Order of 18th March.

Lord RAGLAN: For the Territorial units?

Lord LUCAS: Yes. So that in the case the noble Lord quotes in his eighth Question the battalion would have to raise the necessary 300 men before it was recognised. That was made clear in a circular memorandum to the County Associations, dated 11th April. As to the ninth Question, the Army Order of 18th March, Part II., Paragraph (1), states that on mobilisation the emoluments of the Territorial Force will conform in all respects to those of the Regular Army. The messing allowance will be made the same as it is in the Regulars. The emoluments which that Army Order refers to are the special pay, engineer pay and corps pay, which will be drawn by the Territorial Force exactly the same as they are now drawn in the Regular Army. The Answer to the tenth Question is that 207 officers have resigned their commissions; and, in reply to the last Question, the percentage of Volunteers under twenty on 1st November last, including boys and trumpeters under seventeen, was a little under 28½ per cent. There is no reason to suppose that that percentage will be very much varied in the case of the Territorial Force.

LORD HENEAGE: My Lords, I rise to ask the noble Lord the Under-Secretary of State for War two Questions of which I have given him private notice—first, whether in addition to paying the rent due for ranges for last year, the Associations can pay for the rent of ranges for the current year in this year's accounts, or whether such rent must be carried forward into the next year's accounts in order to comply with War Office methods for book-keeping? Secondly, whether, having regard to Paragraphs 65 and 85 of the Financial Memorandum circulated in March, 1908, the Associations can advance money to commanding officers for the current expenses of taking units into camp out of their Grant for administrative purposes; and if so, whether they can requisition the War Office for repayment of the money so advanced at once, as grants for camp expenses are not paid through the Associations, but through the general officer commanding the district.

LORD LUCAS: If the rent was paid till April last, and it is paid annually, naturally the Association would not tender the rent again, as it would not fall due till April, 1909. As to the second question, the County Associations are responsible for the travelling of the troops to camp, but are not responsible for the expenses incurred by them in camp. The Association can make an application to the War Office to have sums advanced to cover travelling expenses, but the money spent in camp comes out of the training grant.

CRIMINAL APPEAL (AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.].

A Bill to amend the Criminal Appeal Act, 1907, with reference to the appointment of the Judges of the Court of Criminal Appeal, and the appointment of a Deputy Registrar—Was presented by the Lord Alverstone; read 1ᵃ; to be printed; and to be read 2ᵃ on Tuesday, 16th June. [No. 87.]

EVICTED TENANTS (IRELAND) BILL [H.L.].

**THE EARL OF CREWE*: My Lords, I beg to introduce a Bill to amend Section 1 of the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Act, 1907, in respect to the compulsory acquisition of tenanted land. As this Bill does not bear the explanation of its introduction on its face, and as we are about to adjourn for the holidays, I think, perhaps, it would be convenient if I briefly explained the circumstances under which it is brought in. The Bill consists of only one operative clause, as follows—

> "The proviso at the end of subsection (3) of Section 1 of the Evicted Tenants (Ireland) Act, 1907, shall not apply in any case where the tenant consents in writing to the compulsory acquisition of the land by the Estates Commissioners."

Subsection 3 of Section 1 of the Act of last year runs as follows—

> "No tenanted land shall be acquired compulsorily unless it is in the occupation of a new tenant to whom this Act applies, and unless the Estates Commissioners, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, holding, and district, and to the cost involved, consider it expedient that the evicted tenant should be reinstated as a purchaser of that land."

Then comes the proviso with which this Bill deals—

> "Provided that no tenanted land shall be acquired compulsorily which is in the possession or occupation of a *bona fide* tenant using or cultivating the same as an ordinary farmer in accordance with proper methods of husbandry."

I may remind your Lordships of the discussion which took place on that

Amendment. Its design was to carry out a purpose of which we all approve, although we were some time before we were able to hit upon a form of words which commended itself to the House as a whole. Its object was to secure that no *bona fide* tenant who desired to stay should be compulsorily removed by the Estates Commissioners; and the conclusion which, I think, will be clear to everybody who reads the report of the debate in *Hansard* is that it was in the interest of the tenant, and of the tenant alone, that this proviso was inserted. The noble Marquess, Lord Lansdowne, speaking on this Amendment on 23rd August of last year, said—

> "The 'caretaker' the nondescripts, the birds of passage, will not be protected under the terms of our Amendment. Then there are other of these planter-tenants who, no doubt, will be perfectly willing to move elsewhere, under the liberal inducements which are to be offered to them; those men are willing to go and need not be considered. What then remains? Only that *residuum*—that handful of courageous men—who are farming their land properly, who have their farms stocked, who are paying their rent, and who wish to remain where they are."

In the course of the present year a case has occurred on a single estate which has caused the introduction of this Bill. On that estate certain planters came to an agreement with the Estates Commissioners, and it was expected, as we read the Act, that the planters would retire and the evicted tenants be reinstated. But it occurred to the landlord, or some one who advised him, that the section might be read in a different sense. He assumed that not only was the agreement of the tenant to move necessary, but that his assent was also required, and this view was upheld by the Court. The result is that so far as that particular estate is concerned—and the same, of course, would apply to any other estate when the landlord took a similar view, so long as that view is upheld in the Courts—the Evicted Tenants Act of last year becomes nugatory. The object, as we all remember, of that Act, keenly debated and canvassed as it was in this and in the other House, was to produce a kind of eirenicon, a general system of allowing bygones to be bygones; it was an attempt to heal an open sore which, by common consent, was doing much harm in Ireland. We do think it is a very unfortunate thing if a landlord, for reasons of his own—whether they be bad or good I do not pause to consider at this moment—is able to prevent the operation of the Act in a case where the planters are perfectly willing to leave. We, therefore, propose that the proviso at the end of the subsection shall not apply in any case where the tenant assents in writing to the compulsory acquisition of the land by the Estates Commissioners. Of course, I do not expect noble Lords opposite, having only heard the clause read for the first time to-night, to express a final or definite opinion upon it now, but it seemed to me convenient that I should make this statement in moving the First Reading. I do not propose that the Second Reading should be taken until a week or so after the House meets again.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 1ª."—(*The Earl of Crewe.*)

*THE MARQUESS OF LANSDOWNE: My Lords, the noble Earl was kind enough to make me aware of the course he intended to adopt with regard to this Bill. I think all my noble friends on this side will agree that it was extremely desirable that he should do this evening something more than formally move the First Reading of the Bill, and that he should lay before us a clear statement of the reasons which have induced His Majesty's Government to move in this matter. I was glad the noble Earl went on to say that he did not expect us on this side of the House to pronounce a final judgment upon the proposals of His Majesty's Government this evening. I am not prepared to do so even on my own account; still less am I prepared to commit those with whom I usually act. I will only say this with regard to what fell from the noble Earl, that to the best of my belief he described correctly the main object with which we insisted upon the insertion in the Evicted Tenants Bill of a clause protecting a certain section of what were generally described as planter-tenants. What we desired was that those planter-tenants who were *bona fide* farmers, who were cultivating their land in a proper manner, and who did not desire to leave their holdings, should be protected from extrusion under the very strong and arbitrary machinery placed at the disposal of the Commissioners. Our great object was that the protection afforded to these farmers should be real and effectual protection; and I am quite sure that we, on this side of the House, should regard with great jealousy any proposal for new legislation which might render that protection less real or less effectual than it is at present. I add to that that if, inadvertently, we inserted in the Bill words going beyond what was necessary for the purpose of achieving the object we had in view, if it can be clearly shown that the Amendment went beyond the necessities of the case, we should certainly be ready to consider, with an open mind, the propriety of fresh legislation. But it is right, I think, that we should have ample opportunity to consider the manner in which the proposal of His Majesty's Government will work, and that time should be given to noble Lords interested in Irish land affairs to confer with one another, and with those who advise them, as to the propriety of accepting this measure.

THE EARL OF MAYO: My Lords, I rise to say a few words on behalf of those who come from Ireland and are very much interested in this subject. The speech of the noble Earl has taken me quite by surprise, and I was astonished that, in moving the First Reading, the noble Earl should have dealt at such length with the Bill and quoted extracts from the speech made by the noble Marquess the Leader of the Opposition when the clause in question was under discussion last year. If we had had notice of the proposal there are Members of the House who would have been prepared to meet some of the statements which the noble Earl has made. All I wish to say now, however, is that we hold ourselves quite free as to our future action in the matter; and I hope the noble Earl will allow ample time before he puts down the Second Reading, as there are many interested in the question who would like to come over from Ireland to hear what has to be said upon it by the Government.

THE MARQUESS OF LONDONDERRY: I suppose we shall have the Bill in our hands very shortly?

THE EARL OF CREWE: Yes, to-morrow morning.

On Question, Bill read 1^a; to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Thursday, the 25th instant. (No. 91.)

House adjourned at half-past Six o'clock, to Tuesday, the 16th instant, a quarter-past Four o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 1st June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [LORDS] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED WITH.

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied with, viz. :—Aire and Calder Navigation Bill [Lords]; Cambrian Railways Bill [Lords]; Bristol Tramways Bill [Lords]; Upton Town Hall Bill [Lords]; South Wales Electrical Power Distribution Bill [Lords]; Rochester Bridge Bill [Lords]; Bristol Corporation Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz. :—Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE THERETO COMPLIED WITH.)

MR. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of

Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bill, referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders which are applicable thereto have been complied with, viz. :—Oyster and Mussel Fishery (Bay of Firth) Order Confirmation Bill.

Ordered, That the Bill be read a second time To-morrow.

Llanelly Gas Bill [Lords].—Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

Padiham Urban District Council Bill; South-West Suburban Water Bill. As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

Metropolitan Electric Tramways Bill [Lords]; Thames River Steamboat Service Act (1904) Amendment Bill [Lords].—Read a second time, and committed.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 11) Bill.—" To confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board relating to Burton-upon-Trent," presented by Mr. Masterman; supported by Mr. Burns; read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 256.]

Burnley Corporation Bill.—Reported, with Amendments, from the Police and Sanitary Committee (Section A); Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to :—Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) Bill; Loch Leven Water Power Order Confirmation Bill, without Amendment; Conway and Colwyn Bay Joint Water Board Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, " An Act to amend the Law relating to the time for an appeal from the decision of a revising barrister; and matters consequential thereon." [Registration Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, " An Act to enable the Barry Railway Company to construct new railways; and for other purposes." [Barry Railway Bill [Lords.]

Barry Railway Bill [Lords].—Read the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Upper Norwood, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Dulwich; King's Norton; Liversedge; and West Dulwich; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Fishery Board for Scotland, being for the year 1907. Part I., General Report [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST INDIA (DEATHS FROM PLAGUE, ETC.).

Return presented, relative thereto [Address 23rd April 1907; *Sir William Collins*]; to lie upon the Table.

IMPORT AND EXPORT TRADE (IRELAND.)

Copy presented, of Report on the Trade in Imports and Exports at Irish Ports during the year ended 31st December, 1906 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

BELFAST HEALTH COMMISSION.

Copy presented, of Report to the Local Government Board for Ireland [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

EAST AFRICA PROTECTORATE.

Copy presented, of Correspondence relating to the Tenure of Land in the East Africa Protectorate [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COLONIAL REPORTS (ANNUAL).

Copies presented, of Colonial Reports Nos. 557 (East Africa Protectorate, Report for 1906–7) and 558 (Uganda, Report for 1906–7) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

SINKING FUNDS.

Account presented, of the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt, showing the amount received and applied in the year ended 31st March, 1908, in respect of the Old and New Sinking Funds [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 158.]

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF WESTMORLAND).

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County of Westmorland altering certain Polling Districts in the two Parliamentary Divisions of the County [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Copy presented, of Annual Report of Proceedings under the Tithe Acts, Copyhold Act, 1894, Inclosure Acts, and other Acts for the year 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CENSUS OF PRODUCTION ACT, 1906.

Copy presented, of Rules made under the Act by the Board of Trade [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS (NEW ZEALAND AND GERMANY).

Copy ordered, "of Memorandum on the Old-Age Pensions Scheme in force in New Zealand and the Scheme of Insurance against Invalidity and Old Age in force in the German Empire."—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 159.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

Regulations for Postal Servants and Territorial Camps.

MR. MOND (Chester): To ask the Postmaster-General whether his attention has been drawn to the new regulations which have been issued regarding camp allowance and wages of postal employees enlisting in the Territorial Army, whereby they receive their full wages during camp training, but have themselves to pay for the wages of a substitute, whereas formerly no wages were paid during the period of training, but the Post Office paid the substitute; whether he is aware that the wages demanded by the substitute are higher than the regular pay, thereby causing a loss to the postal employees; and, in view of these facts, whether he can see his way to alter the new regulations and revert to the former practice.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) I am in communication with the Treasury on the subject of regulations which they have laid down in regard to granting leave to civil servants who are members of the Territorial Army to enable them to attend training in camp. I hope to receive the reply shortly.

Rebate on Irish Tobacco.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS (Tower Hamlets, Stepney): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what sum was paid out of the Exchequer to the growers of tobacco in Ireland by way of grant or rebate during the years 1905, 1906, and 1907, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The amounts of rebate paid out of the Exchequer to the growers of tobacco in Ireland are as follows—

	£	s.	d.
Year ended 31st March 1906	367	8	4
„ „ „ 1907	912	11	1
„ „ „ 1908	3,395	5	3

Irish Tobacco.

MR. LEVERTON HARRIS: To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer what was the quantity of tobacco grown in Ireland respectively in the years 1905, 1906, and 1907; and what was the amount of Excise paid upon it.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The quantities on which duty was paid are as follows:—

	lbs.
Year ended 31st March 1906	7,353
„ „ „ 1907	20,173
„ „ „ 1908	68,612

The gross duty paid in each year amounted to £1,103, £3,026 0s. 6d., and £10,291 16s. 3d., respectively, or (after deducting the rebates mentioned in the Answer to the preceding Question) to nett sums of £735 11s. 8d., £2,113 9s. 5d., and £6,896 11s.

Cunard Steamships—Government Conditions.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if the two new steamers of the Cunard Steamship Company have now satisfied the conditions made by the Government under the agreement for their construction.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) The Answer to the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative.

Revenue from Tobacco.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state the gross and net revenue from tobacco for the financial year ended 31st March, 1908.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George*) The gross revenue from tobacco in the financial year ended 31st March, 1908, was £15,272,197, and the net revenue £13,739,378.

Old-Age Pensions in Germany.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): To ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that, in Germany, provision for old age and infirmity is made under one insurance; that infirmity pensions are paid at the age when the infirmity begins, and old-age pensions, *eo nomine*, are not paid till after seventy years of age; and that persons over seventy who can prove infirmity often draw an infirmity pension instead of an old age pension; and whether he can state how many old-age pensions were given in Germany five years ago and how many are now given, and how many infirmity pensions were then given and how many are now given.

(*Answered by Mr. Lloyd-George.*) I am aware of the facts referred to by my hon. friend. The following is a statement of the number of pensions in course of payment in Germany on 1st January, 1902, and on 1st January, 1907, respectively—

	Old-age Pensions.	Invalidity.	Including Pensions for provisional invalidity.
1st January, 1902 -	179,450	495,645	8,700
1st January, 1907 -	125,603	836,674	22,099

The number of pensions awarded in the course of the years in question was respectively—

	Old-age Pensions.	Invalidity.	Including Pensions for provisional invalidity.
1901 - - - -	14,849	138,142	7,632
1906 - - - -	10,666	123,390	12,421

Indian Import Duties

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he can state the number of articles subject to import duty in India on which no duty was received during the last financial year.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) I regret that I am unable to give the information asked for. The Indian customs returns of import duties collected give groups of articles only, and do not show whether there are any individual articles which do not yield duty.

MR. BOWLES: To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he can state the total number of articles subject to import duty in India; the total revenue raised in India from import duties during the last financial year; and the proportion of that total revenue yielded by the duties on the six articles of greatest yield.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) As I stated in reply to a similar Question on 21st May, the Indian tariff deals with groups of articles, and I am unable to give the total number of articles liable to duty. In 1907–8 the gross customs revenue from import duties was £4,020,500. Of this 73 per cent. was raised from six articles.

Refusal to Sanction Labourers Cottage Scheme at Ballyfarnon.

MR. JAMES O'KELLY (Roscommon, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that in the Ballyfarnon district of North Roscommon application was recently made under the Labourers Act for the erection of a number of cottages; whether he is aware that the necessary land was offered for the purpose, and that the inspector, notwithstanding the offer of the land, has refused to sanction the scheme; and will he say whether the inspector has given any reason for his decision.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board are unable to identify from the particulars given in the Question the particular cases to which the hon. Member refers. If, however, he refers to the inquiry into the scheme made by the Boyle No. 1 Rural District Council, the reasons assigned by the inspector for disallowing any of the cottages included in the scheme were communicated by him to the council on 4th April last.

Irish Evicted Tenants—Case of Pat Kilroy.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Pat Kilroy, of Rathmagurry, near Curry, Tubbercurry, county of Sligo, was evicted from his farm situate on the Knox estate in that district, on 9th June, 1902; that the farm is now held by Constable Reid, of the Royal Irish Constabulary, who refuses to give it up unless he is paid a compensation of £60; and whether, seeing that the Estates Commissioners have made an offer of £40 to this police constable, who is stationed in Ballina, county Mayo, and that Kilroy and his family are on the roadside, some prompt steps will be taken to have this evicted family reinstated.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The estate in question is in the Land Judge's Court. Kilroy was evicted from his holding, and the tenant's interest in the holding was acquired by Arthur Reid, who subsequently assigned it to his son, Constable Reid, the present tenant. The Estates Commissioners are about to acquire the holding with the object of reselling it to Kilroy, and Constable Reid has agreed to accept from the Commissioners the sum of £50 for surrendering it. Kilroy is already in possession of the holding.

Loss of Dublin Crown Jewels.

MR. H. C. LEA: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if, having regard to the fact that the Vice-Regal Inquiry was confined by the terms of the reference and the ruling of the Commissioners solely to the question of the negligence of Sir Arthur Vicars, and that the findings of the Commissioners have not satisfied public opinion or allayed the feelings of mistrust in the public mind in reference to the disappearance of the jewels, he would now grant a public and judicial inquiry into the whole circumstances of the loss of the jewels, the alleged negligence of Sir Arthur Vicars, and the charges against his character, with a view to ascertaining what person or persons were responsible for the loss.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have no reason whatever to suppose that the findings of the Commission have not satisfied public opinion, but rather the contrary. As I have stated more than once, no charge has been made against Sir Arthur Vicars, by or on behalf of the Government, other than that of negligence in the custody of the jewels, and this charge was fully established by the findings of the Commissioners upon the evidence adduced before them. A public and judicial inquiry with the object of fixing criminal responsibility for the theft is out of the question. The discovery of the criminal is a matter for the police, who are still prosecuting their inquiries, and criminal proceedings will be taken if and when sufficient evidence is forthcoming.

Rioting at Thurles.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has any information respecting the rioting at Thurles on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday last; what was the cause of the disturbances; and what steps have been taken to punish the ringleaders.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The disturbances in question arose out of an eviction at the instance of the Court of Bankruptcy. Large crowds collected at night, and broke the windows in several houses under cover of the darkness. Forty-one persons were summoned to Thurles petty sessions on 30th May for riotous and disorderly behaviour, and the cases have been adjourned until 13th June. Claims for compensation for malicious injury have also been lodged and while these prosecutions and claims are pending it would be undesirable to enter into the details of the matter.

Teaching of Cookery and Laundry Work in Irish Schools.

MR. J. MACVEAGH (Down, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether in the rules and regulations of the Commissioners of National Education for 1907–8, it is stated that cookery and laundry work should be taught as part of the ordinary school programme to girls enrolled in the fifth and higher standards where suitable provision for instruction in these subjects is available, and that a fee of 5s. may be earned in respect of each girl who is taught cookery or laundry work in a national school, provided she has attended at least 50 per cent. of the meetings of the cookery or laundry class; and, if so, will he state whether it is proposed by the National Board in their rules for 1908–9 to abolish payment of this fee for the teaching of these subjects.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The fact is as stated in the first part of the Question. The Commissioners of National Education do not propose to abolish the fees for instruction in cookery and laundry work by their code for 1908–9.

Use of Irish Materials in Erection of Irish Labourers' Cottages.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any steps have been taken by the Local Government Board to secure that only Irish materials are used in the erection of cottages sanctioned under the Labourers Act; and, if not, whether a recommendation on the matter would be issued to all local authorities concerned in the erection of such cottages.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Local Government Board have reason to believe that district councils in Ireland are strongly in favour of using none but Irish materials for labourers' cottages whenever such materials may be procurable. The Board do not suppose that any recommendation from them would stimulate the councils further in the matter, which is one wholly within their discretion.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Samuel Rainey.

MR. LONSDALE: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Estates Commissioners intend to acquire any of the untenanted land on the Manchester Estate at Tandragee; and, if so, whether they will give a holding to Samuel Rainey equivalent in extent to the farm from which he was evicted.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners inform me that no proceedings have been instituted for the sale to them of any untenanted land on the estate in question. As regards the particular case of Samuel Rainey the Commissioners have nothing to add to the Answer which was given to the hon. Member's Question of 17th July last.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Lynch.

MR. CLANCY (Dublin County, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Estates Commissioners was drawn several months since to the case of a tenant named Lynch, evicted from a holding on the Holmpatrick Estate, county of Dublin, and again recently, and that the Estates Commissioners took no notice of the communications made to them in reference to this matter, although the writer was a person of position and consequence; and whether they intend to take any steps in the case.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners are unable to identify the application to which the Question refers. The only application for reinstatement made by a person named Lynch, in respect of a holding situate in county Dublin, is one signed by Annie Lynch, who appears to be resident in Philadelphia. This application was received in November, 1907, and the Commissioners will consider it in due course, regard being had to the applications which were lodged at earlier dates.

Territorial Army—Colour-Sergeants Acting as Sergeant-Majors and Warrant-Rank.

MR. HILLS (Durham): To ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is intended to grant the warrant rank of sergeant-major to colour-sergeant instructors who are acting sergeant-majors of the Territorial Force.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) It is not intended to give warrant rank to these non-commissioned officers.

Political Prisoners in Crown Colonies.

MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthenshire, W.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will give a Return of the number of political prisoners in the Crown Colonies for the last twenty years, stating the period during which they have been imprisoned; and whether the Government from time to time reconsider the cases of prisoners in Crown Colonies who have been committed for political offences with a view to the reduction of sentences, even if no intervention is made on their behalf.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The Secretary of State will consider whether such a Return can be given. The reply to the second paragraph of my hon. and learned friend's Question is in the affirmative.

Position of Settlers in the Orange River Colony.

MR. COWAN (Surrey, Guildford): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has any information as to the intention of the Government of the Orange River Colony to take over the settlers; and whether any suggestion has been made that the Imperial Government should bear any share of the financial loss consequent on such a transfer, having regard to the circumstances in which the settlers were induced to accept lands at prices in excess of their market value.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) No, Sir, I have no recent information on the subject; but the Governor shall be asked for a report on the present position of the settlers.

Stoppage of Salary of Dinizulu.

MR. ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether any reply has been received to the telegram of the Secretary of State for the Colonies of 27th May, No. 8, in Parliamentary Paper on Natal Affairs, Cd. 4001, of Session 1908; and, if so, what is its nature.

(*Answered by Colonel Seely.*) The Governor has telegraphed: "Attorney-General informs me that threatened proceedings take form of suit for recovery of salary alleged to be overdue, but he cannot say when hearing will be. He has again called attention to invariable practice of Government of Natal to stop payment of salary on arrest, and quotes case in 1905 of magistrates arrested in

April and tried in October. In formally approving on advice of my Ministers to suspend salary I recorded my opinion that salary paid to Dinizulu in accordance with condition of return from St. Helena should not be withheld from that chief, Secretary of State for the Colonies not having given authority for this." The Secretary of State has replied as follows: "I cannot but express my great regret that in view of all the circumstances that payment of Dinizulu's salary should have been stopped without the assent of the Secretary of State, seeing that this action cannot be regarded otherwise than as a breach of the spirit of the conditions upon which he was permitted to return to Zululand, and inflicts hardship on the prisoner, who is involved in much expense owing to the prolongation of the legal proceedings. It is not denied that these conditions were accepted as a binding engagement between the Natal Government and His Majesty's Government, in the person of the Secretary of State, and you, therefore, in January last rightly sought the approval of my predecessor when your Ministers desired to suspend Dinizulu's salary. As the conditions clearly provide for the approval of the Secretary of State he is entitled to ask for an honourable observance of their terms. I feel bound to express my disappointment that your Ministers have treated a matter of this importance in which grave political questions involving Native interests and the good faith of the Colony towards His Majesty's Government are concerned on purely technical grounds. Now that the legal construction to be placed upon the conditions as affecting Dinizulu has been referred to the Supreme Court, the decision of that tribunal must be awaited."

Officers Accommodation at Tidworth and Bulford.

Mr. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in order to provide quarters for married officers stationed at Tidworth and Bulford, he is prepared, with the concurrence of the War Office, to sanction the hiring of houses for a term of years up to the limit of the lodging allowance allowed to the various grades of officers.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) The hon. Member has been already informed that the whole question of the provision of accommodation for married officers was being considered by the Army Council. No definite decision has as yet been reached.

Mismanagement at Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Commissioners of the Local Government Board who inquired into the charges of mismanagement at Ruchill, Glasgow, found that the resident medical officers were in no way to blame for what occurred; whether, notwithstanding this finding, these officers have been dismissed; and, if so, whether he will take steps to recommend their reinstatement.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The Commissioners did not find that the resident medical officers were responsible for the irregularities that formed the subject of inquiry; they were not dismissed on account of these irregularities, but on other grounds; and, as already stated in reply to a previous Question, I have no power to interfere with the discretion of the local authority in the matter of their dismissal.

Mr. WATT: To ask the Secretary for Scotland with reference to the public inquiry by his Department into the charges of overcrowding and mismanagement in Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow, whether it was the duty of the Commissioners appointed for this inquiry, in finding the charges well founded, to apportion the blame among the officials responsible; if so, whom did the Commissioners find responsible; and what has been done by the Local Government Board with regard to these officials to prevent a recurrence of the evil.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The Local Government Board's remit to their Commissioners was to "inquire and report to them upon the complaints of overcrowding and under-staffing of Ruchill Fever Hospital and on the administration and management of the hospital." The conclusions of the Commissioners will be found in their Report, which has been issued as a Stationery Office Paper. The main responsibility was declared to rest on the medical superintendent, but, as regards overcrowding, it was shared to some extent by the medical officer of health, and, as regards under-staffing, by the matron. The Report was sent to the local authority, who have now dealt with the officials responsible.

MR. WATT: To ask the Secretary for Scotland whether his attention has been called to the fact that on some days in December, 1907, there were over 800 patients in Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow, although the authorised maximum allowed is only 440; whether his Department has traced who brought about this overcrowding; and what arrangement has it made to see that the statutory duty of the local authority to make provision for all cases of infectious diseases is carried out without giving rise to excessive overcrowding.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Local Government Board shows that on certain days there were over 800 patients in Ruchill Hospital. The majority of the patients were children, and the authorised number allowed is 440 adults. The responsibility for the overcrowding is dealt with in the preceding Question; it lies with the local authority to make provision for such cases and to exercise all reasonable provision in the matter.

Admiralty Employees and the Territorial Camps.

MR. BRAMSDON (Portsmouth): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether their Lordships can see their way to offer encouragement to men in the employ of the Admiralty who may have joined or be desirous of joining the Territorial Forces by making some concessions to enable them to attend the annual camp; and, if so, will he state what those concessions will be.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) As regards the Civil Service, regulations on the subject referred to have been laid down by the Treasury. They are generally to the effect that special leave may be granted for such period not exceeding fifteen days in any one year as may be required for attendance in camp. Any expense incurred in providing a substitute during the special absence of the official must be defrayed by him, while he will be allowed to draw full civil and military pay during the time the substitute is employed.

SIR JOHN BENN (Devonport): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what concessions, if any, the Board of Admiralty propose to make to those in their employ who may be members of the Territorial Army to facilitate attendance at the annual camps.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) As regards the Civil Service, regulations on the subject referred to have been laid down by the Treasury. They are generally to the effect that special leave may be granted for such period not exceeding fifteen days in any one year as may be required for attendance in camp. Any expense incurred in providing a substitute during the special absence of the official must be defrayed by him, while he will be allowed to draw full civil and military pay during the time the substitute is employed.

Cost of Living at Achill Island Coastguard Station.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware of the difficulty experienced by men serving in the Achill Island coastguard station in obtaining fuel, light, groceries, wearing apparel, and other ordinary necessaries of life except at very enhanced prices, owing to inaccessibility of the station; and whether in view of the fact that at many other less inaccessible stations extra allowances have been made to the men, he will authorise 1s. a day per man extra to those serving on Achill Island.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The question of the cost of living at the stations on Achill Island has already been considered, and has been met by the grant of an allowance to cover the cost of conveyance of provisions from Newport to those stations. It is not considered that any further assistance is necessary.

Carriage Gates on the North Side of Hyde Park.

SIR GEORGE FARDELL (Paddington, S.): To ask the First Commissioner of Works if he can see his way to have the gateway in the Bayswater Road, opposite Albion Street, now used by equestrians and foot passengers entering Hyde Park, so altered as to allow the passage of private carriages into the park, there being only two entrances available for carriages on the north side of the park, namely, Victoria Gate and the Marble Arch, as against four on the south side.

(*Answered by Mr. Harcourt.*) I fear that I cannot give the hon. Member any assurance that this gate will be opened to carriage traffic at present. It would involve the employment of two extra park-keepers, for which no provision has been made in the Estimates. I am quite prepared to consider the matter for next year's Estimates.

Closing of Sub-Post Offices on Weekly Half-holidays.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Postmaster-General if he intends to adopt the recommendations of the Select Committee on Post Office Servants permitting the closing of sub-post office for a weekly half-holiday in districts where such is the general practice in other establishments.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The recommendation of the Committee that a weekly half-holiday should be allowed in those cases only where the private business of the sub-postmaster is also closed will be carried out as far as possible.

Extension of Belfast Post Office.

MR. SLOAN: To ask the Postmaster-General if he can state what site has been purchased for the extension of postal work in Belfast; and when will building operations commence.

(*Answered by Mr. Sydney Buxton.*) The site purchased for the extension of the head Post Office at Belfast is bounded on three sides by Miller's Lane, Berry Street, and Smithfield, and on the fourth side by private property. I am unable at present to state when building operations can be commenced; but I will see that matters are pressed forward as far as possible.

Third Class Accommodation on the Evening Boat Train from Dover.

DR. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company make no provision for carrying to London the same evening third-class passengers who arrive at Dover from Belgium about 8 p.m., while provision is made for first and second-class passengers, he proposes to take any steps to remedy this state of affairs.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I am in communication with the managing committee of the railway on this subject, and will inform my hon. friend of the result.

Promotion of Officers in the Indian Army.

SIR SEYMOUR KING (Hull, Central): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the Indian military authorities have considered the effect upon the position of gentlemen rankers in the Indian Army who received their commissions during the South African War of an Army Order recently issued at Home which provides that all Militia service in South Africa during the late war is to count not only for pension but also for promotion; whether a result of this Order will be that a number of officers in the Indian Army commissioned from the Militia will shortly be promoted to captaincies over the heads of gentlemen rankers who are their seniors by date of commission and who were in many cases specially promoted for distinguished services; and whether any steps are contemplated for remedying the incidental effect of this Order.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The promotion of officers of the Indian Army is not regulated by Army Orders issued at Home, but by rules and orders issued by the Secretary of State for India in Council. Their service for promotion is ordinarily counted from the date of first permanent commission in the Regular Army, but officers who served in the

South African War have been specially allowed to count also their active service with a Militia, Yeomanry, or Volunteer commission. Service in the ranks cannot be counted for this purpose, though it counts, under certain conditions, for Indian pension. The question of the grading of officers whose promotion to captain and higher ranks will be accelerated by the counting of service previous to the attainment of a regular commission has been referred to the Government of India.

Evicted Tenants—Case of Timothy Sheahan.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners will consider the case of Timothy Sheahan, of Rathkeale, evicted tenant on the estate of the Earl of Devon, with the view of giving him some untenanted land in the county, having regard to his fitness to work a holding.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have decided that the applicant is a suitable person to receive a holding in the event of their being able to provide him with one.

Claim of William Collopy, Evicted Tenant.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have inquired into the claim of William Collopy, of Cappagh, in the County of Limerick, evicted tenant, for some untenanted land in lieu of his evicted farm; and, if so, with what result.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have placed the applicant's name on the list of persons suitable to receive holdings, and the case will in due course be referred to an inspector with the object of providing him with a farm in County Limerick, if possible.

Case of John Ryan, Evicted Tenant.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have inquired into the case of John Ryan, of Rathkeale, in the County of Limerick, evicted tenant; and, if so, what action do they propose to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have inquired into this case, and have decided to take no action upon it for the present. If, however, the estate upon which the evicted farm is situate should be sold through them they will further consider Ryan's application.

Untenanted Land on the Massey Estate.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have received a resolution from the Ardagh branch of the United Irish League, calling on them not to sanction a sale of the Massey estate situate at Glenville and Ballylin, Ardagh, County of Limerick, unless the untenanted lands on the estate, comprising 600 acres, are purchased by them and utilised for the purpose of enlarging the numerous small and uneconomic holdings on the estate, and for making provision for the evicted tenants and the labourers in the locality; and will he say what action is being taken in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have received a copy of the resolution in question. The Commissioners have in pursuance of the Lord Lieutenant's regulations addressed inquiries to the representatives of the owners in this case with the object of negotiating for the purchase of about 640 acres of untenanted land situate in the townlands named, but have not yet received any reply to their inquiries.

Reinstatement of James Doody, of Ardagh.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners have received a resolution from the Ardagh branch of the United Irish League, calling on them to take immediate steps to reinstate James Doody, of Ardagh, one of the evicted tenants on the Atkinson estate, in his former holding, or, if that cannot be done, to provide him with a farm on the untenanted land at Beaufort as an equivalent; and, if so, will he state what action do they propose to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have referred this case to their inspector with the object of providing the applicant with a holding if one can be found for him.

Sligo Improvement Scheme.

Mr. McHUGH (Sligo, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has received a copy of a Resolution adopted by the Sligo Rural District Council on the 23rd instant, complaining of the delay of the Local Government Board for Ireland in issuing the Provisional Order for No. 4 improvement scheme promoted by the council under the Labourers Act; and whether he will direct the Local Government Board to issue the Order without further delay.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Resolution in question has been received. The inspector has sent a draft of the order he proposes to make in respect of the scheme to the clerk of the rural district council with a view to the schedules thereto being carefully checked and compared with the maps deposited in his office. As soon as this has been done the inspector will at once sign the order, and copies of it will be transmitted to the council when printed. The scheme in this case was a very large one, embracing 495 plots.

Suspension of the Town Surveyor of Naas.

Mr. JOHN O'CONNOR (Kildare, N.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a sworn inquiry by the Local Government Board into the facts connected with the suspension of the town surveyor of Naas, County Kildare, by the Naas Urban Council, was recently held, with reference to the insubordination of the town surveyor in erecting certain lamps in the town of Naas without authority, and in refusing to remove the same on being ordered so to do by the town authority; whether he is aware that, on being requested to hold an inquiry, the Local Government Board instead of doing so entered into a correspondence with the then suspended town surveyor, with the result that they declined to hold the requested inquiry, and asked the said urban council to reinstate the town surveyor; will he say if it is usual for the Local Government Board to disregard the representations of local governing authorities and act upon the *ex parte* statements of suspended officials; whether he is aware that the Council refused to reinstate the town surveyor, and demanded an inquiry, which was ultimately granted, with the result of a finding that the town surveyor had been guilty of insubordination and dereliction of duty, and was directed to remove the lamps in question; whether he is aware that the lamps had been already removed by the urban council, and was this fact in evidence before the inquiring inspector; and whether, seeing that the Local Government Board has now ordered or requested peremptorily that the condemned town surveyor should be reinstated in his office and his salary for the five months during which he has been suspended be paid, he will say on what authority the Local Government Board have so ordered or requested, and on what ground they force an official upon a local authority who has been suspended by that authority for conduct that has been disapproved by the Local Government Board.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) This matter arose out of the surveyor's misinterpretation of an order of the council as to the erection of lamps. It is the fact that an inquiry was held into the conduct of the town surveyor. As regards the second part of the Question, the Local Government Board, in accordance with their usual practice, afforded the town surveyor an opportunity of replying to the charges which were preferred against him by the urban district council. The Board then informed the urban district council that, on consideration of the facts set forth in the documents submitted by the council and of the surveyor's explanation, there did not seem to be sufficient grounds to warrant his dismissal. The urban district council stated in reply that this letter appeared to be based upon a misapprehension due to misleading statements of the town surveyor, and they renewed their request to the Board to hold a sworn inquiry. In order, therefore, to clear up the matter, the Board decided to accede to the council's request, and an inquiry was held in due course. It is not correct to say that the Local Government Board found that the town surveyor had been guilty of insubordination and dereliction of duty. The Board's finding was that the surveyor's mistake in his interpretation of the council's order was not altogether incomprehensible owing to the ambiguous wording of the order, and that the evidence was not sufficient to warrant them in confirming the suspension of that officer. In order, however, to put an end to the dispute, the Board stated that the surveyor must obey the orders of the council as to which particular lamp was to be removed, and that if he declined to carry out their directions the Board would sanction his dismissal for wilful disobedience. The council, apparently, did not wish any of the lamps then remaining to be removed, and as Mr. Hall had in the meantime expressed regret for his mistake and his desire to work harmoniously with the council in future, the Board stated in a further letter that under all the circumstances of the case they would not be warranted in sanctioning his dismissal. As regards the concluding portion of the Question, the Board's sanction to the removal of town surveyors is necessary under Section 7 of The Towns Improvement Clauses Act, 1847, which is incorporated with The Towns Improvement (Ireland) Act, 1854.

Pollution of Rivers by Sheep Dipping.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY (Cavan, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the fact that there is no provision in any Act of Parliament under which sanitary authorities can proceed against parties who cause pollution of rivers or other public waters when the same is caused by sheep dipping; and will he say whether, now that sheep dipping is compulsory and in view of the serious danger to the public and damage to all animal life, he will take steps to deal with the matter, if necessary, by legislation.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Government cannot undertake to deal with this matter immediately, but the question will receive full consideration when any further public health legislation for Ireland is being undertaken.

Purchase of the Atkins Estate Tullypunchion.

MR. VINCENT KENNEDY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will say whether the Estates Commissioners have had the Atkins or Sinclair estate, Tullypunchion, Cootehill, County Cavan, inspected; if so, when did inspection take place; would he enumerate roughly the matters generally dealt with in these Reports and particularly in the Report referred to; have all the tenants signed purchase agreements; and, assuming the sale is otherwise in order, when will the tenants' holdings be vested in them.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners had an inspection made of this estate in July, 1907, and in the following October they issued queries upon the subject of the security for advances and in reference to the cases of four tenants who had not signed purchase agreements. They have since been in communication with the vendor's solicitors and agent in reference to the matter. It is expected that the queries will be disposed of and the holdings vested in the purchasing tenants before the long vacation.

Rent Reductions on the Clanricarde Estate.

MR. JOHN ROCHE (Galway, E.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state the average amount of reductions in rent obtained by the Clanricarde tenants within the past fifteen years as a result of their application to the Land Commission to have fair rents fixed.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Land Commission inform me that all applications to fix fair rents are heard in open court, and the decisions, besides being notified to each of the parties interested, are posted up at the local courthouses at which the cases are heard. In these circumstances the Commissioners do not think it desirable that they should give particulars of the results of judicial decisions under the Land Law Acts in the case of particular estates.

Application for Holding by Stephen O'Grady, of Ballyla.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say whether the Estates Commissioners received an application from Stephen O'Grady, of Ballyla, Rathkeale, in the county of Limerick, for a holding as an equivalent to the one from which his father was evicted; and, if so, what action do they propose to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners received the application in question on 23rd July, 1907, but, having regard to the large number of applications received prior to 1st May, 1907, which must first be dealt with, they cannot say when they will be able to consider the case.

Return of Appointment of Irish Magistrates.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the difficulty experienced in obtaining copies of the latest Return with reference to the appointment of magistrates in Ireland; what is the reason for the delay in issuing the Return for sale; and whether he will lay a copy of the Return upon the Table of the House.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I laid the Return in question upon the Table of the House on 21st May, and an order to print was made on 22nd May. I am in no way responsible for the printing and distribution of such Returns, but I have ascertained from His Majesty's Stationery Office that the printing is in hand, and that copies will be made available as soon as possible. The Return is a voluminous one.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Case of Seaman Bath.

MR. HUNT (Shropshire, Ludlow). I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the only complaint against Ordinary Seaman Bath during his imprisonment has been that of quarrelling with other prisoners, not necessarily his fault; whether he is aware that Bath has now been in prison for three and a half years for quite unpremeditated crime committed in a sudden fit of passion; and whether he will now consider the advisability of releasing Bath.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. McKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): The detailed report now received from the Prisons Commissioners, as to the offences committed by Eli Bath in Portland and Parkhurst Prisons, does not bear out the statements made in the hon. Member's Question.

MR. HUNT: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Bath is now wearing a good conduct badge on his prison dress? Can the right hon. Gentleman say for what crime he is now being kept in prison?

MR. McKENNA: There are various offences charged against him; some connected with his quarrelling with his fellow prisoners and others are offences against discipline. I am glad to hear he is wearing a good conduct badge.

MR. HUNT: Is not the crime of stealing secrets much more serious than the one of which Bath was guilty?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is a matter of opinion.

MR. H. C. LEA (St. Pancras, E.): Does not the right hon. Gentleman think the time has arrived when this man might be discharged?

MR. McKENNA: I have already answered that question.

Gun Running in the Persian Gulf.

*MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what was the nationality of the crews of the dhows which were discovered by H.M.S. "Proserpine" gun-running in the Persian Gulf; and whether the Government has any information as to the source whence the 1,500 rifles and 500,000 rounds of ammunition were obtained.

MR. McKENNA: The dhow which was recently captured by H.M.S. "Proserpine" was Persian manned and had two Afghans on board. The dhow was on her way from Muscat, where presumably the arms were shipped. There is no information as to the source whence the rifles and ammunition were obtained.

Naval Casualties.

MR. MENZIES (Lanarkshire, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will state the number of men who have lost their lives or been injured, as well as the cost to the country of the ships sunk or disabled during 1907 and this year, which can be attributed solely to mimic night warfare without lights.

MR. McKENNA: I will take this opportunity of giving also the information desired by the hon. Member for Faversham and the noble Lord the Member for Horsham, in their Supplementary Questions of May 6th. During 1907, four accidents are known at the Admiralty to have occurred to vessels not carrying lights, involving one injury. During 1908, two accidents have occurred involving the loss of thirty-six lives. The absence of lights cannot, however, be described as the sole cause of any of these accidents. It is not possible to assess the cash value of the loss to the Admiralty arising from these cases. Night manœuvres without lights took place on 146 occasions during 1907 and 1908, the total aggregate of the numbers of ships engaged being 2,299. There were also fourteen occasions on which I have not been able to obtain the names of the ships taking part.

Rosyth.

MR. FELL (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what work is now being carried on at the new dockyard at Rosyth; and how many men are employed there.

MR. McKENNA: No material change has taken place since my reply to a similar Question from the hon. Member for Stoke on the 5th May.

MR. FELL: Is advantage being taken of the long days to push on this work?

MR. McKENNA: Every advantage is taken of the length of the day.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: (Hampshire, Fareham): Has the contract been let; or what is the cause of the unforeseen delay?

MR. McKENNA: I do not know if it has actually been let at the moment, but if not it will be before long.

Dover Harbour Admiralty Works.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty when the works of the Admiralty Harbour at Dover will be completed; and how much it is estimated will be spent upon them during the present financial year.

MR. McKENNA: It is hoped that the main contract for Dover Harbour works will be completed about the end of 1909. There will remain to complete certain buildings and dredging, the date of completion of which cannot be given. The expenditure during the current financial year is estimated at about £100,000, exclusive of the subsidiary works above referred to.

Channel Fleet and Dover Harbour.

MR. FELL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if the Channel Fleet had difficulty in maintaining its position at its moorings in Dover Harbour at the time of the arrival of the President of the French Republic; and if the Fleet had to seek a more secure anchorage in the Downs afterwards.

MR. McKENNA: The vessels which proceeded inside the harbour had no difficulty in maintaining their position. Difficulty was experienced by the vessels moored outside the harbour, which afterwards moved to a better anchorage in the Downs.

MR. FELL: Do I understand that the anchorage within the harbour is satisfactory?

[No Answer was returned.]

Collision between H.M.S. "Lively" and H.M.S. "Earnest."

MR. BELLAIRS (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty in reference to his official statement that the collision of H.M.S. "Lively" and H.M.S. "Earnest," omitted from the annual Return, was of a very minor character, whether the "Lively" was damaged in the stern and was docked for repairs on the 20th August, 1906; and whether he can explain upon what principle the Admiralty comply with the Order in the case of several ships where no repairs had to be executed and omit to comply with it in this case.

Mr. McKENNA: As already stated, the reason why the alleged collision was omitted from the Return was that there is no official report of this collision at the Admiralty.

Mr. BELLAIRS: Is it the case that vessels of the British Navy may run into each other and be docked without being reported to the Admiralty so as to be included in the official Return?

Mr. McKENNA: So far as I am aware the vessels did not run into each other.

*Mr. REES: Can we have a Return of the collisions between the hon. Member for Lynn Regis and the Front Bench?

Alleged Collision of a Submarine.

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty in reference to the official statement that the Admiralty have no record of a collision of a submarine on 21st August, 1906, so that such collision could not be included in the official Return, whether he will cause inquiries to be made into the alleged collision and subsequent beaching of this submarine.

Mr. McKENNA: There is no record of the alleged collision, and there is no need for inquiry to be made.

Mr. BELLAIRS: Are we to understand that the reports which appeared in the newspapers were merely hoaxes?

Mr. McKENNA: I have not seen the reports in the newspapers.

H.M.S. "Angler."

Mr. BELLAIRS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that an official telegram was received by the Admiralty from the Rear-Admiral commanding, sent on 27th September, 1906, from Corfu, stating that the port intermediate crank-head of H.M.S. "Angler" had sheared and wrecked the engine and cylinder, and that three men had been seriously injured; and whether he can state why this casualty was omitted from the annual Return ordered by this House.

Mr. McKENNA: This accident was omitted from the annual Return for 1907 as, owing to the papers on the subject being required for a lengthy inquiry and subsequent action, they did not reach the Department for record until November, 1907. The casualty will, however, be included in the 1908 Return, with a note explanatory of the reason why it was not included in the previous year's list.

Mr. BELLAIRS: Seeing that exactly the same excuse was made in the case of H.M.S. "Terrible," are we to understand that the Admiralty, which takes six months to get out a Return ordered by this House, can always avail itself of the excuse that the records are away at the time a Return is being prepared?

Mr. McKENNA: The Admiralty are not availing themselves of any excuse. The cases will appear in a subsequent Return.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): Is any public advantage gained by a continuation of these Returns?

Mr. McKENNA: The Question of the right hon. Gentleman gives me very much to think over on this subject.

Naval Mechanicians.

Mr. C. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty what new rules have been instituted since 1st January, 1908, regarding the qualifications for mechanicians; why has the standard of the preliminary examination been relaxed; what numbers of eligible candidates have refused the offer of training for mechanician; and what were the principal objections raised by them.

Mr. McKENNA: There are no rules, but for the present, until the stoker ratings trained under the revised regulations introduced in 1906 are eligible for the mechanician course, applicants to qualify for mechanician are subjected to a preliminary examination at sea to test their general suitability. In January last it appeared that a sufficient number of candidates were not coming forward for the next course, and directions were given that the standard of the preliminary test might be slightly reduced as a purely temporary measure. There are now more than a sufficient number of candidates. Of the eligible volunteers for the mechanician course since 1st January, 1908, only one has withdrawn on the ground that he did not wish to re-engage to complete time for pension. The principal reasons which deterred men who entered under the old regulations for volunteering for mechanician appear to be—(1) Doubt as to their ability to pass the educational part of the preliminary test and disinclination to begin school work again. (2) Disinclination of men with homes at Chatham and Portsmouth to remove to Devonport. (3) Unwillingness to re-engage for ten years, with possibility of failing to qualify for mechanician. (4) Prospect of considerable period of time at sea. (5) New regulations not thoroughly understood. The number of men who did not volunteer for the above reasons cannot be stated.

The Territorial Field Artillery.

*MR. ASHLEY (Lancashire, Blackpool): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the proposal to create 182 batteries of Territorial field artillery has the unanimous support of his professional advisers; and on what grounds their approval of this scheme is based.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. HALDANE, Haddington): If the hon. Member will refer to the debate of the 19th March on Army Estimates he will find ample information on the points he has raised. I have only to add that under the new organisation of the British Army the Government is advised on all such matters as this by the General Staff, which is now thoroughly constituted. The Territorial Artillery Organisation is the one worked out and recommended by the General Staff. To adopt what appears to be the hon. Member's suggestion, by following the advice of a miscellaneous medley of self constituted advisers to the Army, many of them of little authority, in place of taking that of the General Staff, would be to relapse into the old state of confusion.

*MR. ASHLEY: Are the opinions of Lord Roberts and Lord Grenfell of no weight?

MR. HALDANE: I did not say so. What I said was that I was acting under the advice of the General Staff and the Army Council.

*MR. ASHLEY: Did not the same Army Council give diametrically opposite advice to the late Secretary for War?

MR. HALDANE: I cannot say what happened at that time, and I have not inquired.

SIR IVOR HERBERT (Monmouthshire, S.): Is it not the fact that very satisfactory reports have been received of the working of the artillery under this system?

MR. HALDANE: Yes; notwithstanding what some critics have said.

Northumberland Artillery Militia.

MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any guns will be provided for the Northumberland Artillery Militia during their training next July; and whether there is any available range for musketry practice.

MR. HALDANE: The General Officer Commanding in Chief Northern Command has been requested to use his discretion in placing guns at the disposal of the Artillery Militia from the Training Brigade at Newcastle-on-Tyne, while not interfering with the practice of the Training Brigade. There is a musketry range half-a-mile distant, at Berwick-on-Tweed, for range and field practices 800 yards long, with two classification canvas targets.

MR. ASHLEY: What public use is served by spending public money on the training of militia battalions which are going to be disbanded?

MR. HALDANE: We undertook that the Militia should not be disbanded until after this year's training. They are to be trained in the most useful way for the

Special Reserve. We are discarding the things that will be useless.

Mr. ASHLEY: Is the right hon. Gentleman sure to get all these men to enlist in the Special Reserve?

Mr. HALDANE: Certainly.

Lord BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley): Is it decided that they shall have guns?

Mr. HALDANE: Most certainly they are going to get guns; they are to be converted into Field Artillery Militia, although they are being trained this summer on the old footing.

Territorial Sergeants—Major and Sergeant-Instructors.

Mr. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether rates of pay for sergeant-majors and sergeant-instructors of infantry battalions of the new Territorial Force, approved under War Office sanction for these battalions when belonging to the Volunteers subsequent to 1902, will hold good and be continued as payments authorised at a higher rate than the general scale under the memorandum on the finance of the Territorial Army issued to Associations.

Mr. HALDANE: In cases where Associations propose a scale of remuneration in excess of the normal and such scale is justified by the circumstances, it will be approved. As I have already explained, no guarantee can be given that rates allowed in the past will be continued under the new conditions.

Mr. ASHLEY: Will the right hon. Gentleman communicate that answer to the County Associations?

Mr. HALDANE: They know all about it already.

Sir IVOR HERBERT: Having regard to the difference in cost of living in various parts of the country will the right hon. Gentleman arrange that the regulations with respect to pay and allowances in these cases are sufficiently elastic to meet the variations?

Mr. HALDANE: That has been provided for. Of course non-commissioned officers from the Regular Army must be treated as such, and we cannot differentiate in their case, but under the regulations special allowances can be made to meet exceptional circumstances and we are prepared to consider any representations from County Associations in regard to such cases.

Army Council Bill.

Mr. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, by Clause 1 of the Army Council Bill now before Parliament, it is intended to transfer to the Army Council the power now exerciseable by the Secretary of State alone of authorising the accounting officer of his Department in writing to charge against Army Votes payments which that officer believes to be unauthorised or improper.

Mr. HALDANE: The hon. Member is mistaken in supposing that this is one of the statutory powers dealt with in the Army Council Bill. The particular power in question is exerciseable by the Secretary of State as supreme chief of his Department by virtue of a Treasury Minute, and this business the Secretary of State reserves to himself under the Order in Council.

Warwickshire Royal Garrison Artillery.

Mr. T. F. RICHARDS (Wolverhampton, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that upon the arrival of the guns for the heavy battery of the Warwickshire Royal Garrison Artillery, South Midland Division, a procession was formed and the guns conveyed to their destination, the horses being led by men with bands round their hats with the names of four well-known brewery firms upon them; whether these drivers were soldiers or brewers' employees; and whether any payment was made, and, if so, what amount, by these brewery companies for this advertisement.

Mr. HALDANE: No information in regard to this matter has reached the War Office. I am, however, glad, in the interest of the Territorial Force, to learn that there was at least considerable enthusiasm over the advent of the guns. I have been informed that as horses could not be got elsewhere the enterprising commanding officer borrowed them from the brewers, and my sympathies on this occasion are wholly with the brewers.

MR. W. THORNE (West Ham, S.) Did the men know what was behind the guns?

[No Answer was returned].

The Military Tournament.

SIR HENRY CRAIK (Glasgow and Aberdeen Universities): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to an item in the Military Tournament, which consists of a burlesque of the Indian Native cavalry, in which the performers were got up to represent sowars; whether the authorities responsible have considered whether such an item is one which is worthy of the British Army; and whether he will take steps to prevent the appearance in the Royal Military Tournament of a caricature of the most loyal troops in India, whose skill in these exercises is unrivalled.

MR. HALDANE: I am informed by the Tournament authorities that this item in the Tournament is in no way a burlesque on the Indian Native cavalry. The best riders and tent peggers available have been picked out for this performance, which is intended to be a reproduction of the very excellent display given by the Native Indian cavalry at the Tournament a few years ago. I may add that similiar displays have been given for several years past.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it was so commented on in the London Press and so accepted by the representatives of the Native Indian cavalry?

MR. HALDANE: If I attended to everything in the London Press I should have a great deal to do.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: Was it so accepted by the representatives of the Native Indian cavalry in England?

MR. HALDANE: I do not know.

SIR HENRY CRAIK: Does the right hon. Gentleman think it is likely that such a performance——

*MR. SPEAKER: That will be a matter of opinion.

General Baden-Powell's Sunderland Speech.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside); I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the fact that General Baden-Powell is reported to have delivered, on or about the 22nd May, an address to members of the Territorial Army and their friends at Sunderland, at which members of the Press were requested by the chairman to take no notes; and whether he will give instructions that at such unreported, but virtually public, meetings officers of the Army shall not indulge in language calculated to set up unfriendly relations between this country and foreign Powers.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Has the right hon. Gentleman considered the precedent made by the late Mr. Edward Stanhope, when Secretary for War, in respect of a political speech delivered by Lord Wolseley, which he said he could not justify, and informed Lord Wolseley so?

MR. HALDANE: There was no dispute about the speech made by Lord Wolseley, which dealt with a matter as to which there was considerable controversy in those days, namely, Home Rule, and Mr. Stanhope very properly said it was not the business of any officer to express opinions on that subject on a public occasion. But this case is quite different. Here there is a question as to what really happened. My attention has not been drawn to the incident mentioned in the Question. No instructions of the nature suggested in the Question are considered necessary.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Were not the reporters ordered not to take notes?

MR. HALDANE: I believe not.

War Office Balloon Factory Secrets.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether during a visit of Continental and British aeronauts to the War Office balloon factory at Farnborough on Thursday, the secrets of the new military airship and war balloons were revealed and the visitors were pledged to secrecy; and, if so, whether the disclosure of secrets was made by his authority.

Mr. HALDANE: No, Sir. Instructions were specially given to ensure that nothing of an important or confidential character should be shown.

Mr. LONSDALE asked whether the visitors on this occasion were not given some information as to the construction of the airship.

Mr. HALDANE said a great many people had seen aeroplanes and dirigible balloons—they were a favourite spectacle on the Continent and here, when they could be seen—but as to secrets being disclosed, that was a very different business.

Mr. LONSDALE: Will the right hon. Gentleman say were secrets disclosed?

Mr. HALDANE: No, they were not disclosed.

Officers' Bungalows in South Africa.

Mr. VERNEY (Buckinghamshire, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the rents charged to officers living in bungalows in some parts of South Africa; whether he is aware that such rents were fixed in order to bring in a return on prices charged for building these bungalows at a time when prices for materials and labour were very largely in excess of what they now are; whether, in spite of the fall in prices generally and of the depreciation of the bungalows, these rents have been maintained, thereby inflicting a heavy charge on the income of the officers who live in these bungalows; and whether, seeing that it is practically impossible for officers quartered in many places in South Africa to live anywhere else except in the bungalows so provided for them, the Government will take into consideration the desirability of a large and immediate reduction in the rents so charged.

Mr. HALDANE: This question is now under consideration.

New Forest Manœuvres.

Mr. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his legal advisers have as yet approved of the draft agreement prepared on behalf of the Court of Verderers for the joint regulation by them and by the War Office of the proposed military manœuvres in the New Forest; and, if so, what is the position under that agreement of the Court of Verderers with reference to any claim for damages made by a commoner.

Mr. HALDANE: The agreement has now been signed by both parties. It provides that the Verderers shall so far as possible and without prejudice to the right of any commoner to prosecute his own claim be entitled to represent the commoners in all questions which may arise between the military authorities and the commoners, and the Verderers will use their best endeavours to promote the settlement of such claims.

Sir ROBERT HOBART (Hampshire, New Forest) asked if it was not the fact that the Court of Verderers had expressed satisfaction with the agreement and were doing their best to aid the military authorities in making arrangements for the forthcoming manœuvres.

Mr. HALDANE: I believe that is so, and I hope the military will find it possible to obtain large quantities of butter, eggs, and milk locally.

Land Ranges for the Territorial Field Artillery.

*Mr. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many County Associations in England and Wales have reported to the general officers commanding-in-chief that there is a possibility of obtaining sufficient land within their jurisdiction to provide land ranges for the proposed Territorial Field Artillery; and how many Territorial batteries it is estimated could fire a summer course on the present land ranges of the United Kingdom after the needs of the Regular batteries have been provided for.

Mr. HALDANE: Reports from the general officers commanding-in-chief show that arrangements for the practice of 116 batteries of Territorial Artillery for the present year have already been made. Further arrangements are in progress. The ranges are not in all cases wholly land ranges. As regards the last part of the Question, it would hardly be practicable to attempt to give any estimate.

*MR. ASHLEY: Are we to understand that in future the Territorial Artillery are to fire almost exclusively on sea ranges?

MR. HALDANE: I said nothing of the sort. Some already have land ranges, and I hope we will get such ranges for all. But the first thing is to teach the men how to handle the guns.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Is it possible to give the men training on technical lines over sea ranges?

MR. HALDANE: No, but I have said we hope to substitute land ranges for sea ranges; but we cannot do it all at once.

Age Limits for Army Service.

*MR. ASHLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of his decision that men over thirty-six years of age are not suitable for active service abroad, orders have been given that the 10,000 non-commissioned officers and men over that age on the regimental strength of the several arms at home, in the Colonies, and in India, shall be discharged from the Army.

MR. HALDANE: No, Sir.

*MR. ASHLEY asked why the right hon. Gentleman refused to allow men over thirty-six to go into the Special Reserve when 10,000 over that age are to continue to serve in the Army?

MR. HALDANE'S reply was understood to be to the effect that while it might not be desirable to have men over that age liable to active service abroad it would be a very different thing to say that the whole Army should be under thirty-six.

Transvaal Gold Law.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government have received a reply to their communication to the Governor of the Transvaal on the subject of the draft Gold Law of that Colony, especially in respect of Sections 127 and 128 thereof, under which special disabilities are to be imposed upon coloured persons, including British-Indians.

THE UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Colonel SEELY, Liverpool, Abercromby): The Answer has not yet been received from the Governor.

Transvaal Local Government Bill.

MR. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the draft Local Government Bill of the Transvaal; whether the Bill restores town regulations which were in vogue under the Kruger *régime*, forbidding any coloured person, irrespective of race, to use the footpaths, and excluding natives and Asiatics from the tramcars; and, if so, will he say if he proposes to take any action in the matter.

COLONEL SEELY: No, Sir; the draft has not yet reached the Colonial Office.

MR. HAROLD COX: I will repeat the Question this day fortnight.

Transvaal Civil Service.

EARL OF RONALDSHAY (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will grant a Return showing the names, post, salaries, and pension, gratuity, or compensation awarded, if any, in the cases of those civil servants who have been retrenched or may be discharged or are under notice of discharge from the Transvaal Civil Service from the date of the granting self-government to the Transvaal up to 30th April, 1908.

COLONEL SEELY: This information is not in the possession of the Colonial Office, but the Transvaal Government shall be asked if they will furnish it—comprising particulars for the whole period since a policy of retrenchment was found necessary.

British Indians in the Transvaal.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the agreement arrived at between the Transvaal Government and the British-Indians in January last suspended the Registration law in favour of voluntary re-registration; whether British-Indians then absent from the Transvaal, but entitled to return, were included; and whether he will inform this House as to the reported decision of the Transvaal Government to exclude some 5,000 of such absent British-Indians unless they comply with the Registration Law.

COLONEL SEELY: The terms of the settlement are printed in the Blue-book Cd. 3892, and the latest official information received showed that registration was proceeding satisfactorily. I have no information with regard to the 5,000 Indians referred to in the Question, but I cannot suppose that the Transvaal Government at any time contemplated such an addition to the resident Indian population. Inquiry shall be made on the subject.

Stoppage of Dinizulu's Salary.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether, in view of the fact that in 1897 Dinizulu was appointed by the Imperial Government as an induna in Zululand with a stipend of £500 a year, under a pledge that his position and stipend should not be withdrawn without the approval of the Secretary of State, and that he has been imprisoned for nearly six months for no definite offence and his stipend has been stopped against the wish of the Secretary of State, he is in a position to state what steps it is proposed to take to give effect to the promise made to Dinizulu in 1897.

COLONEL SEELY; The Secretary of State has been in communication with the Natal Government on the subject, and I fear that I cannot add anything to the full information which has been given to the House.

MR. MACKARNESS: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the fact that in 1897 Dinizulu was appointed an induna in Zululand with an annual stipend of £500, upon a joint understanding come to between the Imperial Government, the Natal Government, and Dinizulu, that the latter should not be deprived of his post or his stipend without the approval of the Secretary of State; and whether he is in a position to state upon what ground the Natal Government justify their having now imprisoned Dinizulu for nearly six months and deprived him of his stipend without having obtained the approval of the Secretary of State.

COLONEL SEELY: I am well aware of the conditions defining the position which Dinizulu was to hold on his return. They are reprinted on page 7 of the Blue-book Cd. 3,998 which has been recently laid. This book, and the subsequent book Cd. 4,001, contain the correspondence with the Natal Government, and I cannot at present add anything to the information there given.

SIR H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is now in a position to make a statement regarding the stoppage of Dinizulu's salary.

COLONEL SEELY: I fear I have nothing to add to my previous Answers on the general question, but I will give some details in answer to the following Question.

MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can say up to what date Dinizulu's salary was paid; and on what date the first intimation was given to Dinizulu by the Natal Government that it would be stopped.

COLONEL SEELY: Dinizulu's salary has not been paid since 30th November. I am not aware when Dinizulu was first informed of the decision, which I have just learned was formally taken on 23rd January, but not embodied in an Order in Council until 26th May. As the salary is payable monthly in the ordinary course, it must be presumed that Dinizulu became aware of the intention of the Natal Government not to continue payment immediately after 31st December.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he has yet received a reply from the Natal Government concerning the stoppage of the stipend of the chief Dinizulu; and whether, in view of this prejudging of his case and the prejudice against his getting a fair trial, the Colonial Office will acquiesce in this treatment of a native chieftain.

COLONEL SEELY: I will read the Secretary of State's telegram, despatched to the Governor on Saturday: "I cannot but express my great regret that, in view of all the circumstances, the payment of Dinizulu's salary should have been stopped without the assent of the Secretary of State, seeing that this action cannot be regarded otherwise than as a breach of the spirit of the conditions upon which he was permitted to return to Zululand, and inflicts hardship on the prisoner, who is involved in much expense owing to the prolongation of the legal proceedings. It is not denied that these conditions were accepted as a binding engagement between the Natal Government and His Majesty's Government in the person of the Secretary of State, and you therefore in January last, rightly sought the approval of my predecessor when your Ministers desired to suspend Dinizulu's salary. As the conditions clearly provide for the approval of the Secretary of State, he is entitled to ask for an honourable observance of their terms. I feel bound to express my disappointment that your Ministers have treated a matter of this importance, in which grave political questions, involving native interests and the good faith of the Colony towards His Majesty's Government, are concerned, on purely technical grounds. Now that the legal construction to be placed upon the conditions as affecting Dinizulu has been referred to the Supreme Court, the decision of that tribunal must be awaited.—CREWE."

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury) asked the hon. Gentleman, in view of the admission that there had been a breach of a binding engagement between the Natal Government and the Imperial Government, when he would be in a position to state what steps the Imperial Government proposed to take.

COLONEL SEELY: Plainly I cannot make any statement now.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.) asked the hon. Gentleman whether he could give an undertaking that, at least, from whatever source it might be found, this £500 would be continued.

COLONEL SEELY: His Majesty's Government are fully aware of the importance of this matter, as, I think my hon. friend will see from the telegram of the Secretary of State, but it would be inconvenient, and probably unwise, to make a definite statement.

MR. BYLES (Salford, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will state on what grounds permission has been refused to Miss Colenso by the Natal Court to act as interpreter between Dinizulu and his legal advisers; and what provision has been made to provide a suitable interpreter in her place.

COLONEL SEELY: I have as yet no official information on this matter.

MR. BYLES: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he has now ascertained that Dinizulu's boxes were broken open and the contents scattered when Colonel Mackenzie ransacked the chief's house at Usutu, and that the intelligence officers helped themselves to what they wanted, but are persistently refusing the defence even to inspect the papers found.

COLONEL SEELY: I have no information on the subject beyond that contained in the Governor's telegrams of 27th March, and 28th April, printed at pages 109 and 179 of Cd. 3998.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: Will the hon. Gentleman make inquiry?

COLONEL SEELY: If the hon. Gentleman will look at the telegrams to which I have referred, he will see the Question is fully answered.

SIR H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether by the law of Natal a prisoner is presumed to be innocent until his offence is proved; and, if so, why Dinizulu, although neither charged with nor found guilty of any specific offence, has been deprived of his salary as a Government induna.

Colonel SEELY: I understand that the view taken by the Natal Government is that a Government induna having been arrested with a view to criminal proceedings, his arrest and detention carry with it his suspension from the service of the Government and consequent suspension of salary.

Mr. MACKARNESS: Does that apply when no definite charge is made against him?

Colonel SEELY: I can only say what is the view of the Natal Government. I do not know whether it is the view of His Majesty's Government.

Mr. MACKARNESS: Is there any case on record in which an induna has been suspended in this way with no definite charge made against him?

Colonel SEELY: I could not give an answer to that Question. Perhaps the hon. Member will put a Question down on the Paper.

Sir H. COTTON: I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, having regard to the prolonged and indefinite character of the criminal proceedings brought against Dinizulu, and to the action of the Natal Government in stopping his salary during these proceedings, and to the pledge of the Imperial Government that his salary shall not be withdrawn without the approval of the Secretary of State, His Majesty's Government will take steps to secure that Dinizulu has adequate means to provide for his defence.

Colonel SEELY: The consideration which the hon. Member enumerates are being duly borne in mind by His Majesty's Government, but they are not at present in a position to state what action they will feel it their duty to take in the matter.

The New Hebrides.

Mr. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when it is proposed to appoint British officials authorised to interpret and enforce the New Hebrides Convention.

Colonel SEELY: All the important British officials required for administrative purposes under the New Hebrides Convention have already been appointed and are discharging their duties. None of the Judges of the joint Court have yet been appointed; for the reasons stated in my reply to the hon. and gallant Member for St. Andrews Burghs on 5th May, the Court cannot begin its functions for some little time.

Colonial Governors and Martial Law.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE (Gloucester, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can inform the House whether any instructions have been issued to Colonial Governors in resepct of martial law since the circular despatch of Lord Carnarvon presented to Parliament in 1867; and whether there exist Colonial statutes investing the executive with power of suspending the ordinary law, such as that of which the repeal was directed by Lord Carnarvon in a despatch to the Governor of Antigua set forth in his circular despatch.

Colonel SEELY: The Answer to the first part of my right hon. friend's Question is in the negative. With regard to the second part, may I ask him to put it down for Wednesday next, by which day I hope the necessary particulars may have been obtained.

Sino-Burmese Frontier.

Earl of RONALDSHAY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Chinese Government have yet accepted the demarcation of that part of the Sino-Burmese frontier known as Scott's Line; and, if not, whether negotiations are still in progress with a view to a settlement acceptable to both parties being arrived at, and how long such negotiations have already been in progress.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden; for Sir E. Grey): The Chinese Government have not yet accepted the Line which His Majesty's Government notified to them in 1906 as, in their opinion, constituting the boundary. Since then negotiations have taken place at intervals, but no settlement has been arrived at yet.

The Case of Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg.

MR. LAIDLAW (Renfrewshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Russian Government have yet furnished their reasons for arresting Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg, a naturalised British subject, whilst he was travelling under the protection of a British passport; whether the Government have accepted those reasons as adequate; and, if not, whether he will ask the Russian Government to make compensation for the injury inflicted on Mr. Luxenburg's health and business.

MR. J. A. PEASE: The answer to the first part of the hon. Member's Question is in the affirmative, and the communication of the Russian Government is now under consideration. With regard to a claim for compensation, as soon as a decision has been arrived at my right hon. friend will be ready to make it known.

Russia and Persia.

MR. SMEATON (Stirlingshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any official information showing that recently the Russian commander on the Persian frontier, on the pretext that one of his horses had strayed, entered Persian territory, accompanied by armed men, without informing the Persian authorities; that after killing the servant of a Persian family the Russian party retired; that immediately thereafter a Russian force entered Persian territory, sacked and burnt the villages of Beliasuvar and Zargar and another village, and killed over 100 persons; whether this proceeding is in accordance with the stipulation of the recently concluded Anglo-Russian Convention; whether there is any guarantee that, on a like pretext, similar violation of territory and similar outrages may not be perpetrated on the Russo-Afghan frontier; and what action His Majesty's Government, as the other high contracting party to the Convention, has taken or intends to take in the matter.

MR. J. A. PEASE: My right hon. friend has no official information which corroborates the account of this incident given by the hon. Member. All that he knows of the affair is contained in the reply returned on 25th May to the Question asked by the hon. Member for the Ripon Division of Yorkshire.

MR. LYNCH (Yorkshire, W.R., Ripon): May I ask whether, seeing that the Anglo-Russian Convention guaranteed the integrity of Persia, it is not the business of His Majesty's Government to inquire into frontier incidents of this nature?

MR. J. A. PEASE: I must ask for notice.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Why is not the Secretary for Foreign Affairs here to answer Questions?

MR. J. A. PEASE: When the Foreign Secretary was appointed, the Prime Minister at that time explained that on two days a week he would be substituted.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: And is he to be substituted in going to Russia?

[No Answer was returned.]

Police Court Fines.

MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can state the objects upon which the moneys accruing from fines levied in police Courts and by benches of magistrates are expended.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): Except in the cases where fines imposed by magistrates at Petty Sessions are otherwise allocated by statute, they are paid into county or borough funds, and go to pay for the maintenance of the Courts and the other purposes for which county and borough rates are raised.

The Winchester Riots.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has been in communication with the Mayor of Winchester in reference to the recent riotous proceedings in that city, during which a mob took possession of the streets, and on two successive nights not only wrecked but robbed shops and houses, the military being called out three times and 300 special constables sworn in; whether his attention has been called to the action of the local authorities in surrendering prisoners under threats of violence by a large crowd; and whether steps will be taken to protect the property of peaceable and law-abiding citizens in this city.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The Mayor of Winchester has brought this matter to my notice. There was some disorder in the town on the two nights in question, and lamps and windows were broken, but the reports of what occurred appear to be exaggerated. I am not aware that any shops and houses were wrecked or robbed, or that any prisoners were surrendered under threats of violence. I am satisfied that the local authorities are fully alive to their responsibility in respect of the maintenance of order, and that there is no reason to apprehend further disturbances of the kind.

Mr. FLYNN: What would have occurred had this happened in Ireland?

Mr. GLADSTONE: I am not responsible for the Government of Ireland.

The Mile-End Riot.

Mr. B. S. STRAUS (Tower Hamlets, Mile End) asked the Home Secretary whether he was aware of the riot that took place yesterday at the junction of the Whitechapel and Mile End roads owing to a child being killed by a motor-omnibus; whether he would see that the motor traffic was under better and safer control than at present; and whether he would also see that the police were instructed to prevent any such awful scene occurring again.

Mr. GLADSTONE said that he had no information beyond what he had seen in the papers, but would make inquiries.

New Zealand and Danish Tariffs.

Mr. HAROLD COX: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to a speech by the Premier of New Zealand expressing the opinion that the Colonies were within their rights in asking for preference, and that they should not be called upon to compete against Denmark and other countries which had built up high protective walls; and whether the duties levied by Denmark upon British produce are higher or lower than the duties levied by New Zealand.

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Mr. Churchill, Dundee): I have seen a report in the newspapers to the effect stated in my hon. friend's Question. A comparison of the relative incidence of the Danish and New Zealand tariffs on the principal articles exported from this country on the lines explained in the Fiscal Blue-book (Cd. 2337) indicates that the Danish import duties on those articles are considerably heavier than those of New Zealand.

Railway Brakes.

Mr. WARDLE (Stockport): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the statements made by deputations to his Department in connection with recent railway accidents, suggesting that brakes are in use on some of the railways which are faulty in design or construction; and, if so, whether he proposes to take any action in the matter.

Mr. CHURCHILL: The attention of the Board of Trade was drawn to certain suggestions of this character by the Chief Inspecting Officer of Railways in January last, and also by deputations since that date. The Board have for some time been in communication with the principal railway companies thereon, with a view to a thorough investigation of various types of brake. This suggestion has been favourably received, and it is understood that the necessary steps are now being taken for an examination which will be carefully followed by the expert officials of the Board of Trade.

MR. WARDLE was understood to ask if it was intended that the inquiry should apply to the continuous brakes used by all railways.

MR. CHURCHILL asked for notice, and added that the railway companies were doing their best to help the inquiry.

Marine Department Surveyors' Clerks.

MR. C. DUNCAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what, if any, departmental regulation keeps the clerks in surveyor's offices of the Marine Department as a separate class, and, as such, prevents their being promoted under Clause 15 of the Order in Council, dated 28th November, 1898; and whether he will now take such action as will lead to the selection of eligible men from amongst those clerks to fill any vacancies for Second Division clerks occurring in his Department.

MR. CHURCHILL: There is no regulation to prevent these clerks being promoted under the terms of the Order in Council and their claims will be considered with those of others when suitable opportunities occur.

Royal Commission on the Poor Laws.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether he is aware that no Reports of the Evidence and Memoranda which have been submitted to the Royal Commission on the Poor Laws have yet been issued, though it is understood that many of these volumes are now in print; whether he can arrange for the issue of these Reports to Members as soon as possible after they are set up in type; and whether he can arrange especially for the issue of those volumes which contain Evidence and Memoranda on unemployment, aged poverty, and infirmity.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea): Perhaps I may be allowed to answer this Question, and to refer to the reply which I gave to a similar Question put to me by the hon. Member for the Govan division on 20th May. As I then indicated, the Royal Commission at the outset of their proceedings, and on subsequent occasions, decided that it would not be advisable to publish the Evidence and Memoranda submitted to them before their Report is issued.

MR. GOULDING: In view of the fact that the sittings may extend over two years, is it intended to keep back all the evidence until it reports, and then dump it down, volume after volume?

*MR. SPEAKER: That is a matter entirely within the discretion of the Commission.

Northumberland County Council School.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the fact that the Northumberland County Council has recently purchased from the Duke of Northumberland a site for a school between Westerhope and North Walbottle at a price of £927 13s. 4d. per acre; whether he is aware that the rental value of the site is about £1 per acre, and that the cost of erecting the school is between £5,000 and £6,000; whether, seeing that the school, being about a mile distant from each of the places named, is inconvenient for both, he has made any inquiries whether two convenient schools could have been erected at the same building cost and at a much lower cost per site; and, if not, whether he proposes to cause an official inquiry to be made into such expenditure.

MR. JOHN BURNS: I am aware that the county council have purchased this site, the cost of which was £749, including legal expenses. I do not know the amount of the rental value. The estimated cost of the buildings and furniture was £4,386. The question of the convenience of the site for educational purposes was one for the Board of Education, and they informed me in March, 1906, that they had approved of it so far as educational requirements were concerned. A loan for the purchase of the site and the erection of the school was sanctioned in 1907, and the building has since been erected. The matter cannot be re-opened, and I could not undertake to direct an inquiry on the subject.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: Is any redress open to the inhabitants in the case of the wrongful expenditure of public funds like this?

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I think the local authority might have made earlier representation as to the unsuitability of the site.

Mr. J. M. ROBERTSON: But in the case of the local authority having offended, have the inhabitants no redress?

[No Answer was returned.]

Council Buildings and Trade Union Meetings.

Mr. WARDLE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the action of the St. Helens Town Council in refusing to let a room in the council buildings for trade union purposes on a Sunday, and to the action of the Welshpool Town Council in refusing to let a room in the council buildings to the Welshpool branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants except at a prohibitive rate; and whether he proposes, by legislation or otherwise, to take such action in the matter as will prevent the possibility of local authorities taking up this position in the future.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I have made inquiry as regards the cases mentioned by my hon. friend. I do not understand that the town council of St. Helens have refused the request made to them. A committee of the council have been in communication with the local branch of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants on this subject with a view of ascertaining whether the meetings could not be held on a week-day. The secretary of the branch has now replied on this point, and the matter will be brought before the town council. As regards the Welshpool case, I am informed that the town council offered the society the use of a room on Sundays, at a charge of 3s. for each meeting not exceeding two hours, this charge to include firing, lighting, cleaning, etc. I do not think I could propose legislation on this subject, but I am glad to know that many local authorities are willing to grant facilities for meetings of trade unions, friendly societies, and other similar bodies.

Mr. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): How many local authorities returned favourable answers to the Circular sent out by the right hon. Gentleman?

*Mr. JOHN BURNS: The circular was issued two months ago. I have received forty-two replies, thirty-two of which stated either that accommodation for working men's associations had already been provided or expressed their willingness to provide it.

Prince's Square, St. George's-in-the-East.

Mr. DICKINSON (St. Pancras, N.) I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to an announcement that the central portion of Prince's Square, St. George's-in-the-East, is to be sold by auction for commercial purposes; whether he can take any action which will prevent this land from passing into the hands of private speculators before the local authorities shall have had an opportunity of purchasing it for or on behalf of the public; and whether, in view of the importance of preserving intact the squares and other similar air-spaces in London, he will consider the advisability of including in the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill provisions which will in future render illegal the erection of buildings upon land at present so used.

Mr. JOHN BURNS: I am aware of the proposed sale. The matter is not one with respect to which I am empowered to take any action of the kind suggested, but I am informed that it is improbable that the land will pass into the hands of private speculators, regard being had to the condition of the property market and the particular circumstances of the present case. I doubt whether a provision of the kind referred to in the last part of the Question could properly be included in the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill.

Cash-on-Delivery System.

SIR JOHN RANDLES (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General if he can give any assurance that it is not intended to extend the cash-on-delivery system to the United Kingdom without giving retail traders in the country full opportunity to state their objections.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The cash-on-delivery system just instituted is confined to certain Colonies and Dependencies. I hope it may result in materially extending mutual trade in small articles. I have no present intention of dealing with the question of introducing the system of cash-on-delivery into the United Kingdom—a proposal involving quite different considerations.

The Apostles' Creed.

MR. DUNDAS WHITE (Dumbartonshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether the teaching of the creed called the Apostles' Creed, and, of what, if any, other creeds or formularies distinctive of any denominations or groups of denominations, is permitted under the Cowper-Temple clause in provided schools.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): Since the repeal of Section 16 of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, the Board of Education have possessed no power to determine authoritatively the legality or otherwise of the teaching of any specified formulary in council schools.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): Had the Board the power before the repeal of the section?

MR. RUNCIMAN asked for notice.

Registration of Teachers.

SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that there is now general agreement among the educational bodies concerned as to the constitution of the council for the registration of teachers; and whether he can now state what further steps have been taken with a view to the continuance of the register.

MR. RUNCIMAN: No, Sir. Representatives of certain sections of the teaching profession, but by no means of all branches of the profession, have agreed, as I understand, to certain propositions as to the best lines on which a new Registration Council should be framed; and these have been discussed by those representatives with the Board. The representatives have decided to consider further various points of difficulty which are involved in the proposals and the Board are awaiting a communication from them, with a view to publishing for general consideration the proposals referred to with such modifications as the representatives may have decided upon.

SIR WILLIAM ANSON (Oxford University) was understood to ask if a conclusion will be arrived at by the earliest possible day.

MR. RUNCIMAN: There will be no delay on the part of the Board of Education.

Meals for School Children.

MR. WARDLE: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education whether he will call the attention of local education authorities to the fact that, under the Education (Provision of Meals) Act, the machinery necessary for the provision of food to the children may be paid for out of the ordinary education rate, and that the whole of the halfpenny rate authorised by the Act may be devoted to the supply of food alone.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I think the Circular issued by the Board shortly after the passing of the Act makes it clear that the limitation of expenditure to the produce of a halfpenny rate applies only to the expenditure on the provision of food.

Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the resident medical officers at Ruchill Fever Hospital, Glasgow, have been dismissed because they drew the attention of the Local Government Board to evils which have been fully substantiated on public inquiry; and, if so, will he say what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (Mr. Sinclair, Forfarshire): The resident medical officers at Ruchill Hospital were not dismissed because they drew the attention of the Local Government Board to the evils referred to. The dismissals were agreed upon by the sub-committee on hospitals on the grounds stated in their Minute of 13th January. I have no power to interfere with the discretion of the local authority.

Mr. WATT: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether nurses have been dismissed and threatened with dismissal from Ruchill Hospital, Glasgow, on account of their having given evidence before the Local Government Commissioners; and, if so, will he, in view of the public necessity that those with knowledge of the facts be not in future intimidated from giving evidence in such cases, call the attention of those under his Department to the unwisdom of such action.

Mr. SINCLAIR: I am not aware that nurses have been dismissed and threatened with dismissal from Ruchill Hospital on account of their having given evidence before the Commissioners, but I am making inquiries.

Insanitation at Newcastle.

Sir J. JARDINE (Roxburghshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he is aware that the medical officer of health for the County of Roxburgh has reported that the drains in the village of Newcastleton are defective and half full of sludge, and that the water drawn from the wells is dangerous to drink; and whether, in the event of the proprietor taking no measures to remedy this state of things, and in view of the risk of typhus and diphtheria, any public action will be taken by way of precaution.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The facts, as stated by my hon. friend, have been duly reported and the Local Government Board are in communication with the local authority as to the remedies that should be applied.

Rural Population of Roxburgh.

Sir J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state the average population per square mile in the rural districts of the County of Roxburgh, and also the percentage of increase or decrease in the last two decades.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The average population per square mile in the rural portion of the County of Roxburgh, *i.e.*, the portion of the county outside the Burghs of Hawick, Jedburgh, Kelso and Melrose, at the time of the 1901 Census was 33·5. Owing to the fact that Melrose was a burgh at the time of that Census, but not at the time of the 1891 Census, a corresponding figure regarding the extra-burghal portion of the county at the time of the 1891 Census is not available. The average population per square mile of the portion of the county outside the three burghs of Hawick, Jedburgh, and Kelso, at the time of the 1901 Census, was 36·8, the figure corresponding to that at the time of the 1891 Census was 40·7, the comparison showing that the population per square mile of the county, as thus tested, decreased by 9·6 per cent. in the intercensal period.

Agriculture in Roxburgh County.

Sir J. JARDINE: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he has any return of the number of the population in the County of Roxburgh employed in agriculture; and whether the number so employed is on the increase or decrease.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The number of persons employed in agriculture in the County of Roxburgh, at the time of the last Census, 1901, was 5,372, which is 436 less than the corresponding number at the time of the 1891 Census, and 538 less than the corresponding number at the time of the 1881 Census.

Solway Firth Fishery Laws.

MR. MOLTENO (Dumfriesshire): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether, in accordance with the expectations held out at the Annan fishing inquiry in February, 1906, he can see his way to introduce, at an early date, a Bill for the reform of the fishery law dealing with the Solway Firth, and especially to make it clear that whammeling is legal.

MR. SINCLAIR: The Government will consider this subject with a view to the legislation which my hon. friend suggests. With regard to the second part of the Question, I am informed that whammeling has never been declared illegal.

Scottish Endowed Schools and the Education Bill.

MR. SUTHERLAND (Elgin Burghs): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he would prepare and circulate for the use of Members, in connection with the Education (Scotland) Bill, a Memorandum giving a list of endowed schools in Scotland falling within the provisions of the Bill, with particulars of the purposes and amounts of endowments available for education in respect of each school or endowment.

MR. SINCLAIR: To my regret I find that, if I understand its terms correctly, the labour and time involved in the preparation of the Memorandum asked for by my hon. friend would be so great as to make its production impracticable until too late for the present discussion; but if he will be good enough to confer with me I will place at his disposal such information as is before me.

Armagh Post Office Wage Scale.

MR. LONSDALE: I beg to ask the Postmaster-General whether any decision has yet been arrived at with regard to the classification of the head post office at Armagh under the new scheme of remuneration and conditions of service in the Postal Department.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: The position of Armagh in the new classification has not yet been settled.

Land Valuation Bill.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will state on what date the Land Valuation Bill for England and Wales will be introduced.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I cannot as yet fix the date, but I hope very shortly after Whitsuntide.

Royal Visit to Russia.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether it is intended to appoint Lord Justices or guardians for the administration of the Government during the absence of the Sovereign from the realm, inasmuch as His Majesty is not to be accompanied on his visit to Russia by a responsible Minister of the Crown, and cannot accordingly perform any royal act required of him with as much validity and effect as if it were done in his own dominions.

MR. ASQUITH: The Answer is in the negative.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Lord Campbell in 1845 said that the absence of the Sovereign from the realm without a responsible adviser was an abeyance of all his functions, and whether on the same occasion Lord Lyndhurst said the Sovereign would be accompanied by a Minister of the Crown?

MR. ASQUITH: I do not carry that in my memory. Perhaps my hon. friend will give me notice.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I will tell the right hon. Gentleman all about it on Thursday if I have a chance.

The King and the Ministry.

MR. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will say how the Government keep themselves posted as to what occurs at interviews between the Sovereign and any foreign potentate at which the Foreign Secretary, or other Member of the Cabinet responsible to the House of Commons, is not present. The hon. Member complained that the form of the question had been altered by the Clerk at the Table.

Mr. SPEAKER: It was I who cut the Question down, and I call on the hon. Member to put it as it appears on the Paper.

Mr. ASQUITH: My hon. friend may be assured that the Government are kept informed, and preserve their responsibility for the conduct of all State affairs. The assumption contained in the Question that when a foreign Sovereign stays with the King, or the King with a foreign Sovereign, they should never meet though staying in the same house, or, if they do meet, should only converse in the presence of a Cabinet Minister, is not reasonable.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is it not a proper assumption and has it not been held again and again that the Sovereign cannot enter into any communication with a foreign Minister or a foreign potentate except in the presence of a Cabinet Minister? I can give the Prime Minister dozens of instances.

Mr. ASQUITH: I am not aware of them.

Mr. H. C. LEA: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer my Question as to how the Government keep themselves posted as to what transpires?

Mr. ASQUITH: No, Sir, I do not propose to answer that Question. It is sufficient to say that the Government do keep themselves posted.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Russian Prime Minister and the Russian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will accompany the Tsar, whereas the King will be unaccompanied by any Minister?

Mr. ASQUITH: I do not know what the arrangements of the Russian Government are. I only know of our own arrangements.

Mr. H. C. LEA: May I press for an answer to my Question, in view of the fact that Ministers are responsible to this House for what transpires?

***Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. Member has had his Answer. Anything more seems to be in the nature of argument.

The Creation of Peerages.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether it has been the custom when changes in the constitution or powers of any body are impending, and legislation for that purpose is adumbrated by the responsible Government of the day, to refrain from making additions to the body thus circumstanced which are not rendered mandatory by statute while such changes are pending; and on what ground, having regard to the legislation in reference to modifications in the constitution of the House of Lords foreshadowed in the King's Speech at the opening of the session of 1907, and the Resolutions of the House of Commons in June, 1907, moved by the late Prime Minister on the same subjects, have additions been made by the exercise of the prerogative of the Crown in the creation of peerages to the number of the Members of the House of Lords.

Mr. ASQUITH: I am not aware that there is any historical foundation for the custom alleged in the first part of the Question. There does not appear to be anything in the proposals referred to in the second part of the Question to interfere in point, either of logic or of policy, with the regular exercise of the prerogative of the Crown in the bestowal of honours.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that, when Mr. Gladstone brought forward his Resolutions against the Irish Church, and when those Resolutions were carried, he immediately obtained an Address from the Crown—a notification that its prerogatives would be in abeyance pending legislation? The right hon. Gentleman has got his Resolution about the House of Lords; will he——

***Mr. SPEAKER**: Order, order. The hon. Member's Question is in the nature of a speech.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: No, Sir, only a commentary.

MR. H. C. LEA: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether in view of the fact that this Government, since it came into office in December, 1905, has created a number of peers, he will now give this House an assurance that it will, during its tenure of office, make no further recommendations to the Crown for the creation of any additions to that Chamber.

MR. ASQUITH: The Answer is in the negative.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the desirableness of suspending the creation of further peerages until the Chancellor of the Exchequer has had an opportunity of considering my suggestion for the taxation of titles?

[No Answer was returned.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked as to the course of business. Referring to the Prime Minister's interpretation that the debate commencing that day could be concluded by dinner-time on Tuesday, the right hon. Gentleman recalled the fact that in 1902, 1903, and 1904, three days were devoted to the Second Reading of the Finance Bill, and in 1905, when the Budget was admittedly uncontroversial, two full days. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would bear that in mind. He also asked when it was proposed to discuss the Royal visit to Russia, and if that were taken on Wednesday, what Supply would be set down for Thursday?

MR. ASQUITH said he had expressly stated in answer to a Question a few days ago what the views of the Government were with regard to the debate on the Second Reading of the Finance Bill. He was still of opinion that, in view of the discussion that had already taken place and of the automatic suspension of the eleven o'clock rule, adequate opportunity would be given for discussion by concluding the debate at dinner-time to-morrow. With regard to precedents, what distinguished this year from any in recent experience was that they had actually got two Bills before them. They were obliged to put their old-age pensions scheme into a separate Bill, and the result was that both Bills gave the opportunity for discussion which as a rule was only afforded upon the Finance Bill. That seemed to make his suggestion for concluding the debate by eight o'clock to-morrow reasonable. The remaining time to-morrow would be occupied with two or three small but important Bills, in order that they might be got to a Standing Committee. With regard to the raising of the question of the King's visit to Russia, he gathered that the intention was to raise the matter in Supply. In that case, it would not be a topic of discussion on the Motion for adjournment, and the Foreign Office Vote would be put down for Thursday.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR further asked the Prime Minister whether he had noticed the large number of Amendments on the Paper with regard to local taxation, and whether he had observed that that subject formed part of the Amendment which might be regarded as the official Opposition Amendment. The question of old-age pensions, therefore, did not come in quite so much as the Prime Minister supposed. With regard to Thursday, he asked whether any other topics would be discussed beyond the Russian visit or raised at some other time in Supply.

MR. ASQUITH said that with regard to the debate on the Russian visit, it might be convenient to ask the House to meet earlier on Thursday, at twelve o'clock as on Fridays, and to discuss the Foreign Office Vote then. He would give a definite answer to-morrow.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.) asked if it was not the case that on the Old-age Pensions Bill they would be confined to a discussion of the principle of that Bill and that on the Finance Bill alone could they discuss the ways and means to pay for pensions.

MR. ASQUITH: My experience is that so far both topics have been discussed.

MR. CHAPLIN (Surrey, Wimbeldon) asked when the Old-age Pensions Bill would be circulated?

MR. ASQUITH said that the Old-age Pensions Bill was in the hands of the printers. It would be circulated either to-morrow or the next day at the latest.

MR. HAROLD COX asked the Prime Minister whether, as the Opposition Amendment to the Finance Bill indicated a change in the fiscal policy, he would not ve the Opposition full opportunity of explaining what that policy was.

[No Answer was returned.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON reported from the Standing Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee C: Mr. Clancy; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Irish Universities Bill): Mr. Kavanagh.

Report to lie upon the Table.

FINANCE BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. LAURENCE HARDY (Kent, Ashford), in moving the following Amendment—"That, in view of the growing liabilities of the nation for naval and military defence, old-age pensions, and education, and of the necessity for giving additional relief to ratepayers from the increasing charge for national services now thrown upon the rates, this House regrets that no attempt is made to increase the resources of the Exchequer by broadening the basis of taxation," said they ought to have had a clearer statement as to the manner in which the finances of the country were to be conducted during the coming year, and he thought it was rather remarkable that they should have embarked upon the discussion on the Second Reading of the Finance Bill without having had an opportunity of seeing the Old-Age Pensions Bill, although the central point of the whole Budget was the question of old-age pensions. They had endeavoured to obtain some information with regard to this amazing Budget, but they had so far failed. They had had no explanation whatever of the extraordinary change of front which the Prime Minister had shown as compared with his attitude when Chancellor of the Exchequer. Last year he gave them certain cardinal features by which the finances of the country were to be conducted, and no one could put them more plainly than the right hon. Gentleman, but apparently at this moment, if they took the statement of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, those theories had been utterly upset. The last time they had a discussion on that point the present Chancellor of the Exchequer said how impossible it was for anybody to budget except for the year, but that was the very thing the Prime Minister said they ought to do. He said last year—

> "It is an utter mistake to take the annual Budget as if it stood by itself, as it is, and ought to be, an integral part and a necessary link, in a coherent chain of policy. We cannot drift along the stream and treat each year as if it were self-contained.

At that time the Prime Minister also said they had to observe two great axioms. They had, first and foremost, the obligation to reinstate the national credit, and he appealed for a large sum for the reduction of the National Debt. Had they reinstated the national credit already? Was the Government entirely satisfied with the position of the national funds and of first-class securities? Was this the moment when, after saying that their first object was to reinstate the national credit, the right hon. Gentleman should recommend a raid on the Sinking Fund? This was not the moment when such a thing should have been tolerated. Further, if it seemed good to the Members of this House to reduce the charge set apart for the reduction of the National Debt, he thought all would agree that any saving upon that head should go to the reduction of the income-tax, their second line of reserve in case of emergency, and ought not to be used for the purposes of social reform. Therefore, so far as any further reduction of this charge might be contemplated, he did not think it was wise for them to consider that it would be safe for them to carry out an extensive system of social reform by money taken out of the charge now applied to the National Debt, for the reinstatement of the credit of the nation. There were many contingencies which might not happen again. Last year, £1,500,000 was kept as a nest-egg for old-age pensions. Then there was the China Indemnity contribution, and surpluses had helped considerably. They had not yet heard from the right hon. Gentleman why he had taken the standard of twenty years ago instead of ten years ago as the amount for the reduction of Debt. Many supporters of the Government had expressed their dissatisfaction at the adoption of this course and in almost every speech the suggestion of a raid on the Sinking Fund had been received with considerable disapproval, especially by those hon. Members opposite who had some right to speak upon financial matters. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said the other day in a somewhat light tone that he knew he had to find another £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 next year. This was almost the first Budget which left a little deficit of £6,000,000 or £7,000,000 to be supplied out of practically no funds whatsoever. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had spoken lightly of the prospects of further economies in our defensive forces. Was there anybody prepared to say that the Territorial scheme was likely to cost less than was suggested? It could only cost less if it was a failure, and that was what they heartily hoped it would not be. As far as the standing Army was concerned nobody thought that this was a moment when we could reduce our garrisons abroad. We had been obliged to strengthen the garrison in Egypt and the situation in India was such that we could not withdraw any of our military forces from that country. He did not see how there was going to be any great economy on the Army. As for the Navy all sides admitted that it was necessary to keep up the standard that had been set up, and that would involve expenditure not only on new ships, but also on stores, and new docks in order that they might have somewhere to dock these great ships which were now being built. With regard to the Civil Service Estimates the Chancellor of the Exchequer had admitted that their programme involved an increased expenditure of about £5,000,000 since the present Government took office. A glance at the Order Book would show how interwoven with expenditure was every suggestion of legislation. If they turned to education they would find a Bill which proposed £1,000,000 as a sop for its acceptance. There was another Bill estimated to cost £1,400,000, but after the statement made the other day announcing further terms to buy up certain interests the expenditure would not stop at the amount named. The Irish Universities would require more money, and the measure dealing with Scottish land would entail further expenditure. When all these schemes came to fruition what would be the consequences when the expenditure upon them had to be faced? There was still a much larger question which required considerable attention at their hands. What interested him most was the question of the relation between local and Imperial finance, which the Prime Minister put in the forefront of his Budget statement last year. He said on that occasion that he was going to sweep away all these old subventions, and effect a settlement on generous lines between Imperial and local finance. They expected some statement upon that subject in the present Budget, but they had been disappointed; there was nothing in the Finance Bill which encouraged them to believe that they were going to receive any further relief from the Government in connection with this matter. In fact there seemed some doubt as to whether they were going to receive quite as much relief under this heading as in the past. They had placed this matter before the Prime Minister, who had expressed some sympathy with them; but they could not rely upon sympathy alone, because if once they got involved in expenditure of this kind there would not be much money left to deal with the relations between local and Imperial finance. Last year the House passed a Bill dealing with the medical inspection of children, involving an expenditure of about £1,000,000. They had hoped that other matters might have engaged the attention of the Government. The right hon. Gentleman had expressed great sympathy in regard to the question of lunatic asylums, and the subject of the roads. Could there be a case which it was more necessary that the Government should acknowledge as a national service than the lunatic asylums? Practically the whole of the cost of management of lunatic asylums came, not from local but Imperial sources, and the county authorities were asked to finance matters over which they had very little control. Turning to the roads, this was a matter which caused him some anxiety. He would like an explanation of the position the Government had taken up in connection with the collection of licence and other duties. As far as he could see, the right hon. Gentleman, like the fisherman, had spread his net wide and gathered everything in, but when he looked at his catch he only took those which were worth having, and threw back to the local authorities the small fry of very little value. The game, the dog, and the carriage licences, which were not likely to be an increasing revenue, he had given back to the local authorities, and he had taken from them the sources of revenue from which they were most likely to gain, namely, the motor licences and the liquor licences. It was especially in connection with the use of motors that the great expense in connection with the repair of the roads had arisen, and any extra advantage from an increase or alteration in the charges for motor licences ought to be dedicated to the local authorities for the use of the road, or else they should be allowed an equivalent grant. It was incumbent upon the Government to do something in this direction, because the matter was very pressing and it was important that they should show their sympathy with this object in a substantial way. Then there was another burden of an even more formidable character, and that was in connection with old-age pensions. The present Chancellor of the Exchequer had said the other night that in this respect the Government intended to make a stupendous effort to redeem their promises. That was rather remarkable, because the Prime Minister himself had said they had made no promise in this direction. They were told that in this Budget they were providing a sum of £1,500,000 with which to start old-age pensions. Last year they earmarked a sum amounting to £1,500,000, but this year they were providing only £1,200,000 or £300,000 less than last year. Was that the colossal effort the Government were making to redeem their pledges? That could not be deemed a satisfactory manner of carrying out what the Prime Minister said was his second axiom in connection with national finance. He said—

> "Having regard to the objection of taking away half the sugar duty and the practical conclusion to which I have come that I must not permanently impair my means of revenue in view of the future I do not propose to make any change in this duty."

The right hon. Gentleman went on in even stronger words to say that, so far as he was concerned, he was not going to part with any substantial methods of taxation, until he had financed the new scheme which he indicated in last year's Budget, and which he had restated this year. The House must remember that though the words of the right hon. Gentleman did not pledge him to a contributory scheme of old-age pensions, he pledged himself to a scheme which would be contributed to through taxation by those who were going to enjoy it, but, so far as the scheme was concerned, it had been started on a non-contributory basis, and was not contributed to by those who were going to enjoy it. It had limitations which everybody knew could not be maintained. Some of them would disappear later on, and one or two in regard to married couples would vanish in the course of this session. It was a scheme which could not possibly be kept within the limits suggested by the Prime Minister, and even the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not think it was a complete scheme. Yet they had this scheme before them without any provision whatsoever——

*Mr. SPEAKER: There is nothing about old-age pensions in the Finance Bill.

Mr. LAURENCE HARDY said he had no desire to discuss the old-age pensions scheme in any sense, but he thought that in discussing the Finance Bill they were always allowed to refer to any matter contained in the Budget statement. Reference was made in the Budget statement to £6,000,000 for old-age pensions. They could not deal with the Budget as a whole, nor with the Finance Bill, without alluding to some extent to the money to be found for old-age pensions.

*MR. SPEAKER: I think the hon. Gentleman would be entitled to refer from the financial side to the question of old-age pensions, but not to go into a detailed examination of it. There will be another opportunity on another Bill for discussion, and I do not think it would be at all convenient or proper to discuss the question now.

MR LAURENCE HARDY said he did not desire to dwell on it. He only alluded to it to show how extremely wide it was in its nature, and the manner in which it was to be carried out. So far as his present argument was concerned, he only desired to direct attention to the fact that, in addition to the great liabilities to which he had previously alluded, this liability for old-age pensions was brought before them by the Government in the Budget, and yet the Finance Bill did not provide for the future financing of the scheme. The consequence was that enormous weight would be thrown on the financial future of the country. Undoubtedly the question of expenditure did come very closely in contact with that of old-age pensions, and especially that part of the scheme which referred to limitations, because as soon as the limitations went more money would be required, and it was impossible for the Government to put forward as an excuse for these limitations the fact that they had removed a certain amount of taxation. If the Government insisted upon reducing the taxation upon sugar, the limits they had put on the old-age pension scheme were not limits which they ought to have made in the circumstances of the case, for in order to make the scheme perfect they might have used the money which they were going to remit, and thereby removed the objections which would naturally be taken to the scheme. The Government had £1,500,000 in last year's surplus. They had taken off part of the sugar duty and now they had only £1,200,000 for old-age pensions. When they found the revenue mortgaged up to the hilt, an enormous increase of liabilities, to some extent a falling off in revenue—at all events last year's figures were not likely to be repeated—and practically no balance at all, and when they found that the Government had failed to indicate any new source of taxation, then he thought the Opposition were justified in bringing forward their objections to the financial position placed before the House, and asking the House whether, considering the position as a whole, it was a convenient precedent to be followed in the future. It was the reckless dive of the gambler. [Laughter.] Hon. Members laughed, but they did not laugh at certain bye-elections. It was a gamble to meet a certain exigency and to afford a fruitful source of oratory on the platform when the other side of the question could not be brought forward. It was a political attempt rather than a financial one, and it was on that ground that he preferred rather to turn to the more sober statements of the Prime Minister as Chancellor of the Exchequer last year than to what was said when the right hon. Gentleman was rather exhilarated by the effects of recent bye-elections. If in the coming year we had to face all these great liabilities, then he thought it was necessary to indicate to some extent how the financial position was to be met. The Opposition had again and again asked the Government what was their inherent proposal of finance which was to carry them through these liabilities, and they had had no answer. The Government said that they had not come to the last word in connection with free trade finance. Well, it might not be the last word, but it was getting very near the last word. The next words, he thought, would come from the hon. Members below the gangway, and they would not be in any way likely to benefit the trade of the country. The proposals from below the gangway affecting capital and employment were hardly likely to lead to that commercial prosperity which hon. Members on both sides of the House had at heart. That prosperity was not to be found by falling into the vortex of finance suggested by the Labour Party. That was where the Government were being surely led, for they had thrown out no suggestions as to how they were going to meet those great future liabilities without taking from the programme of the hon. Gentlemen to whom he had alluded. He was glad to say that the Opposition had not come to the last word on the question either; they had only so far got to the very first word in connection with tariff reform. Though their proposals might be received grudgingly in the House, they were every day received with greater approbation in the country, and it was because they believed that any party in this House would eventually be driven to widen the basis of taxation instead of constantly narrowing it as the Government had been doing that he moved this Amendment. He and his friends believed that they might in this case take lessons from others who had been enabled to gain great advantage from widening the basis of taxation, and at the same time that they might not have that frightening and dwindling of capital which had resulted from the policy of the present Government. If they could encourage capital they knew that they could deal also with the much more difficult question of unemployment, which was a cause of serious concern. It was not for the Opposition at the present moment, and still less for a private Member, to suggest the taxes which should be imposed in order to widen the basis of taxation. Sufficient was it for him to say that those who sat around him joined him in believing that they had an alternative policy which was constantly gaining strength, and it was only by widening the basis of taxation, instead of constantly narrowing it as they had done by repealing the coal-tax and in other ways, that they could look to those great resources necessary for our Imperial and local finance. Believing in this, and believing that they had a most serious task before them in the great liabilities the Government had thrown upon the nation, it was greatly to be deplored that in giving this account of the national finance the Government had found no means of showing how they might find the funds which would be required. In his opinion the only way in which it could be done was by widening the basis of taxation. He begged to move.

* CAPTAIN MORRISON-BELL (Devonshire, Ashburton) having claimed the indulgence of the House in addressing it for the first time, said he was in very hearty agreement with every word which had fallen from his hon. friend in moving the Amendment. They were starting a very dangerous precedent—a precedent which, he thought, it was no exaggeration to say was very likely eventually, if they continued to act in the same manner, to be the means of breaking up the Empire. He considered that the whole scheme of finance, as outlined by the Prime Minister in his Budget Speech, was a mad gamble for votes. When the Budget was introduced they were told that the old-age pensions scheme was going to cost about £6,000,000, and very shortly afterwards there was a reshuffle, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer put the amount at £7,000,000. But he had very good reason to think that the sum would eventually be much more like £11,000,000. After the great increase which he thought every Member of the House would admit would be certainly necessary in the expenditure on the Navy, there was the new Education Bill, which, if it ever became law, would, with other expenses, still further increase the expenditure by about £8,000,000. It struck him that that was sufficiently formidable when they remembered that we were now in a year of falling trade Returns. All this was apart from the ultimate cost of the old-age pensions scheme, which at present only dealt with the fringe of the question. They had every right, and in fact it was a duty they owed to their constituents, to point out the foolhardy, if he might say so, endeavour to finance this great country in such Budgets as they had seen put before the House lately. But he wished more particularly to associate himself with that part of the Amendment which dealt with the increased charges for national services on the rates. He thought it would be generally admitted that the enormous increase in the rise of the rates, in spite of the fact that the rateable value had increased to a great extent, was becoming a very serious and pressing danger. It

seemed to be often lost sight of that it was no use adding item after item to the charges on the rates, and then asking the ratepayers to be contented with small amounts from the Imperial Exchequer. When they saw that from 1889–90 to 1904–5 the charges on the local rates had risen 70 per cent. for poor relief, 50 per cent. for police, no less than 206 per cent. for education, and no less than 134 per cent. for main roads and bridges, it was high time that they asked the Government to do something to lessen the burden which the agricultural constituencies were feeling so heavily at the present moment. Yet, in spite of all these charges on the rates, Members on the Government benches brought in and voted for measures, and when they found that they were unable to squeeze the money required out of the Treasury, the extra charges created by the Bills were thrown in many instances on to the rates. Recent examples of that were the medical inspection of school children, the feeding of school children, and the expenses of the Small Holdings Act. He considered these increased burdens on the rates a very serious matter. In Devonshire the rise in the rates during the last seven years had been very marked, amounting to 124 per cent., although he admitted that that was greatly owing to the Education Act. The rise, however, had been very great indeed in the county and police rate, so that it could not be all put down to education. He believed it was a great deal more in Gloucestershire and in many other counties. These charges were bound to increase in the future, and he did not think that the Government realised the seriousness of the case or were dealing with it so as to benefit those who suffered. It had always been understood that the burden should fall on the shoulders of those best able to bear it, but that seemed to have been conveniently lost sight of in regard to rates, though it had not been ignored in regard to taxes. The Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, published in 1901, pointed out the seriousness of the increasing charges on the rates, but here they were in 1908 and nothing had been done to relieve the burden. He confessed that the Unionist Party was not altogether free from blame. [MINISTERIAL cries of "Hear, hear."] Yes, but two blacks did not make a white; and they who represented agricultural constituencies were anxious to press on the House the fact that these burdens were increasing and were bound to increase enormously. He would give the instance of the rate for main roads and bridges. Very often those who paid that rate hardly used the main roads; they were used by people who came from the towns and had nothing to do with the payment of the rates. If the Government would only tackle that question he felt sure that they would have the gratitude, especially of the agricultural constituencies, more than they were likely to have by passing the Small Holdings Act or even by doing away with home-fed beef for His Majesty's troops. It was a very curious thing that whenever a Bill was brought in by the Government there was almost invariably a clause which created some other authority than the local authority with power to see that the provisions of that particular Bill were carried out. To employ an expression used by one of the Members of the present Government, why was it necessary that all the local councils required this amount of "gingering"? He knew that hon. Members opposite were very fond of saying that it was the fault of the wicked landlords who terrorised the local councils and brought their influence to bear upon them to prevent them from doing their duty. But these reasons came from Members who were interested in towns rather than in country districts. Might he suggest that the real reason and the more self-respecting reason—if he might say so—for the town councils, rural district councils, and parish councils taking that course was the fact that they were perfectly aware that the burden on the rates was already so excessive that they felt very reluctant indeed to add to it, and in many instances they would not move until forced to do so; by some central authority which had no interest in the local conditions of that part of the country. It was for that reason and not because they did not wish to do their duty that many local councils were reluctant to apply their powers. He was very much afraid that they were not going to get much satisfaction from the Government on the question of local taxation; they had so many schemes to carry through, and to please so many other people who took no interest in the agricultural communities. If the Government were going to find the money they were asking for to finance the scheme of old-age pensions they would not be able to find the money urgently needed for relieving the burdens of local ratepayers unless they broadened the basis of taxation.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out from the word 'that' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'in view of the growing liabilities of the nation for naval and military defence, old-age pensions, and education, and of the necessity for giving additional relief to ratepayers from the increasing charge for national services now thrown upon the rates, this House regrets that no attempt is made to increase the resources of the Exchequer by broadening the basis of taxation."—(*Mr. Lawrence Hardy.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I have listened to the two speeches which have been delivered upon this Amendment and the thought that occurs to me most with regard to them is that they dealt with only one portion of the Amendment, namely, local taxation. The question of local taxation interests the minds of hon. Members very greatly. With regard to that I should like to say that although the Government have not been in a position to deal with this question as a whole broadly, they have made considerable advances in the direction hon. Members desire, namely, in the shape of the reform of the licensing duties and the diminution of local taxation. Last year my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer disentangled and simplified the national accounts by having the whole national statement in one Budget—which was certainly an advantage, so far as the national finances are concerned. The hon. Member opposite said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer on that occasion took all the great fishes and left the small ones, but I do not think that was quite accurate, because last year my right hon. friend said that although he simplified the national taxes he did not interfere with local taxation at all.

MR. LAURENCE HARDY: What I said was that in taking back this tax he rendered it impossible for local authorities in the future to bargain for further alterations. I am quite aware that the right hon. Gentleman promised us all that came down.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I do not see that there is any question of bargaining. Where it is a question of local interests and national interests the latter always go to the wall. I think that everyone admits that before you can deal with general local taxation in England, you must effect some reform as to assessments, and the Government have pledged themselves to bring in a Bill this session which will mark a considerable step in that direction. The Royal Commission on Local Taxation made practically three suggestions. They said that a certain portion of the burden of Poor Law relief ought to be borne by national resources; that some relief ought to be given in the matter of police, and that some alteration ought to be made in the proportions of the cost of education borne locally and by the State. The Government have already made a beginning with regard to two of these matters. The old-age pension scheme will to a certain extent relieve the Poor Law administration and certainly give some relief to the rates. We have also in a small way relieved the rates of the burden of the Unemployment Act and thrown that on the Exchequer, and if hon. Members of this House and the Members of another place will allow the Education Bill to go through that will be of great and immediate assistance to the relief of local rates. I was somewhat amused at the speeches just made and the anxiety of the hon. Members for these reforms. I would ask them if they were now so anxious to have these reforms carried out, why it was they did not urge their own friends during the ten years that they were carrying on the Government of the country to carry out something in this direction. During those ten years hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite carried only two measures of relief by way of doles, and they were so badly arranged that they reached the undeserving quite as much as the deserving. At the same time they raided the Sinking Fund and largely increased the expenditure both on the Army and on the Navy. I do not think, therefore, it is we who ought to be called upon to deal at an early stage with this difficult and complicated subject when hon. Members so long neglected it themselves. As I listened, and I listened attentively, to what the hon. Gentleman said of the Budget as a whole, I was unable to find out what he objected to. Does he object to old-age pensions? I believe with regard to that that we shall receive the general support of hon. Gentlemen opposite, as it is a subject largely outside party politics. Does he object to the reduction of the sugar tax or the large reduction, which is promised this year, of the Debt? Those are the three points the Chancellor of the Exchequer has provided for. The hon. Gentleman spoke of the last biscuit, and said there was nothing in the locker, and that the time had arrived for fresh taxation. That position has not yet arisen. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made provision for all the burden that will fall upon him in reference to the scheme for old-age pensions. It is no part of the duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he has £3,500,000 in hand, over and above his liabilities, to keep that money in his pocket and not to deal with taxation. It is his duty to allow that money, to use an old fiscal phrase, to fructify in the pockets of the people. It is much better that people should have taxation reduced if even it is only a temporary matter, which I do not think it will be. But in this matter hon. Members ought to look at the financial position as a whole during the three years in which my right hon. friend the Prime Minister was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Hon. Members the other night told us that in those three years we had done nothing except to add to expenditure and taxation, but in those three years the Government remitted a net amount of something like £8,000,000 of taxation, and they have also reduced the Debt by over £40,000,000, which in itself represents a saving of £1,500,000 in interest alone. Under these circumstances they do what the hon. Gentleman wants to do in another way, and if they then find that in order to carry out a great social reform they have to make some further call on the Sinking Fund, I think they will be fully justified in so acting. The hon. Member said—

> "If you are going to raid the Sinking Fund, give the benefit to the income-taxpayers."

That was what Mr. Goschen did, but if we are going to reduce the Sinking Fund I prefer to put the large surplus aside and earmark it for a large social reform like old-age pensions. The hon. Member then went on to what I hoped was going to be the really practical and interesting part of his speech, but just as I began to listen with great hope to the part when he commenced to speak of how hon. Gentlemen opposite proposed to broaden the basis of taxation he, like the mover of the Amendment, promptly sat down. I certainly hope before this debate ends we shall have some light and leading on that point from the Front Opposition Bench. Both hon. Members talked of broadening the basis of taxation, a phrase which, like "fiscal reform," begs the whole question. To broaden the basis of taxation you must impose additional taxation, and we are fully entitled in a matter of this sort to ask hon. Gentlemen opposite what are the proposals they have in their minds by which the basis of taxation can be broadened. It is not enough for them to say "You must wait until we are called upon." The whole of their policy depends not upon a great principle but upon details. Before taking this leap in the dark we are entitled to ask them the specific question how they propose to broaden the basis of taxation and what taxes they propose to impose. In the debate last year we were in the dark, and I defy anyone reading that debate to find out what the proposals of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite were last year any more than it is possible to find out what their present proposals are. I am quite prepared to discuss the merits of any particular proposal for increasing the extent of taxation. Everybody admits that taxation is an evil—I am speaking now from the financial point of view—except those who propose a high tax on licences. But the real question to consider in taxation is whether a particular tax is likely to be more burdensome than the one you are going to supersede, or the one you are going to reduce. The Government have been brought up in that school which believes that under a system of simplifying taxation you can actually put on more taxation with a lesser burden to the country because the taxes are less irritating and more economically raised. Hon. Members opposite are propounding a policy which if it means anything at all means this, that they propose to impose a much larger number of taxes, to tax a much larger number of articles, and a much larger number of people. That must be less economical and more irritating than the policy we profess. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition has given us his view, on more than one occasion, as to the question of broadening the basis of taxation, though I do not know that we have always been able to discover what is his meaning. But he has made three or four statements of a fairly clear description which I should like to read to the House, because I think that in discussing this subject we want to know more or less what is the official view in regard to it. The first proposition which the right hon. Gentleman laid down last year was that revenue should be derived from duties small in amount, but on articles of which there is large consumption, and which will, therefore, yield a large revenue without any serious dislocation of trade. That is exactly the policy which was carried out by Sir Robert Peel and by Mr. Gladstone for many years; therefore, I am glad to that extent that we have the assent of the right hon. Gentleman. Then again the right hon. Gentleman said last May that he objected to any system which had for its object the diverting of the trade and commerce of the nation from its natural channels by artificial legislative means. That is the general proposition which he has laid down. I think that any proposals made by the right hon. Gentleman must be judged by those standards. Now we have before us, as far as we have been able to judge from the various speeches made both inside and outside of this House, practically three propositions for broadening the basis of taxation. The first is retaliation, the second is preference, and the third is so-called fiscal reform. As regards retaliation, it is quite obvious that it has no value whatever in reference to the broadening of taxation, because if it be successful—and the right hon. Gentleman says it will be successful—it cannot, in any case, produce revenue. And that brings us to a much more important question, that of Colonial preference. There again we are all agreed that raw material for manufacture shall be excluded from taxation. The Prime Minister has more than once stated that in his opinion the exemption of raw material made a system of preference almost impossible as between the various Colonies and the Mother Country, because the only articles which some of them send to us are almost wholly articles of raw material, to which it is not proposed that any preference should be given. If it be true that the only way, or the best way, of keeping the Empire together is to give preference, then I do not see how you are to give a substantial preference to all the various Colonies; I cannot see how that is possible. As regards preference itself, I take it that the proposal is to broaden taxation by putting taxes on a considerable number of articles which are at present free from them, and that it will substitute one tax for another. I confess I have never been able to see quite what advantage it would be to this country. I suppose that nobody would desire that for the liquor and tobacco taxes you should substitute taxes on corn, meat, and other articles of import. I do not believe that from the national point of view, or from the point of view of the consumers, it would do anything except make the consumer lose if he had to pay on corn and meat rather than on tea and sugar. We have reduced the sugar duty to the basis suggested by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham. We have taken a farthing off, and left it at a farthing per pound; but if, as I imagine, hon. Gentlemen on the other side do not desire any further reduction of the duty on sugar, then in regard to the broadening of taxation they must put that aside. That leaves us, of course, with the income-tax. I take it from various speeches we have heard, and from one we have heard just now, that the idea of producing this revenue is largely in order to diminish the income-tax. I do not think that this country intends to diminish the income-tax at the expense of the consumers of food. But the question is whether preference is going to produce revenue. It is one of the matters mentioned in the Amendment of last year as likely to assist the broadening of taxation. In the first place, the whole amount of the revenue could not be great, and will not be great; and I would also point out that the more successful preference is, the less will be the revenue. If this scheme is to be successful, foreign corn will have to be superseded by Colonial corn, so that it is obvious that if this is going to be a successful policy there will be no revenue left to broaden the basis of taxation. The only way in which you would be able to obtain any revenue to broaden the basis of taxation would be if your system of Colonial preference failed and did not divert the foreign corn from continued import. As to broadening the basis of taxation—we are not to call it "protection" but only "fiscal reform"—I would point out that it is really not a policy, which, if successful, would do much to broaden the basis of taxation, because the object of that policy, as we understand it, is largely to divert trade and enable employers to manufacture goods here rather than in foreign countries. But to divert trade from one industry to another, and from one country to another, will not broaden the basis of taxation, and even if you were successful in your object of reviving the trade in pearl buttons, jewellery and other articles, there would be precious little revenue left to broaden the basis of taxation. I would seriously ask hon. Gentlemen who propose to arrange this system of taxation what articles they intend to put duties upon, and how far they will be really successful in producing revenue and broadening the basis of taxation. That is, I think, a most material point. The Board of Trade Return which has been presented to us in regard to these matters is interesting reading. If you adopt the proposal that the raw material of manufacture is not to be taxed it really amounts to putting the tax on purely manufactured goods which come to this country, and the taxation would be of almost uniform amount. According to the Board of Trade Return there is not much more than £50,000,000 worth of wholly manufactured goods coming into this country, and a 10 per cent. duty would not produce more than £5,000,000, and that amount, if the system were successful, would gradually diminish. I am anxious that the Leader of the Opposition should show clearly whether he is in favour of a policy such as that. We have always been told that particular trades have gone away, or are going away, and that in order to keep them we must impose these duties on the products of foreign rivals. Therefore it is obvious that the chief advantage which it is thought will accrue from those duties is not the revenue that they will produce, but the fact that they will keep certain articles of manufacture in the country, and enable our own manufacturers to make them. If you have this preference, or what I call protection, you will really not have much left on which taxation can be imposed, nor will you have any great revenue for the purposes which hon. Members have at heart. As far as we are concerned the Chancellor of the Exchequer has done in this year all that can be expected. He has relieved taxation; he has paid off a large amount of Debt; he is covering his liabilities; he is meeting the claims upon him; and he hopes to end the year with a surplus. That is a position of which I think any Chancellor of the Exchequer may be proud. If it is found that the expenditure increases, and that fresh taxation is necessary, then I do not think it will be found that within free trade limits the resources of civilisation are entirely exhausted. But that is a question which has not yet arisen, though we are prepared, if necessary, to reimpose old taxation, or new taxation on the old lines. What I think we are entitled to ask hon. Gentlemen is this, not that they should make perorations on the broadening of taxation and then sit down, but that they should tell us exactly, in so many words, where they are going to broaden taxation, what articles they are going to tax, and how they are going to tax them. I say that without that knowledge it is impossible for us to know whether the proposal they make to us is a right and proper one for this country to adopt.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): I am sure the House has listened with interest to the speech of the Postmaster-General, but hon. Members cannot help feeling that he has not contributed much to the elucidation of the Budget which he rose to defend. In an illuminating passage of his speech he said that what he desired to know upon the questions with which he was dealing was the official view of the case. That is what we desire. The right hon. Gentleman forgets that he has crossed the floor of the House, and that it is for him and his colleagues to state the official view. What is the situation we have put before the House? Some of my hon. friends endeavoured to put it the other day on the income-tax Resolution, and we put it in more general terms immediately the Chancellor of the Exchequer finished his Budget speech, and what we said then has been reinforced by my two hon. friends who have spoken to-day. We say that if you survey, as the right hon. Gentleman asked us to do, the whole field of finance, not merely for one year but for two or three years, you can see that the situation with which we are faced is one of a great and rapidly growing expenditure. You see that in spite of the most definite pledges and the most lavish assurances that hon. Gentlemen opposite when they came into power would reduce expenditure, circumstances have been too strong for them, and instead of reducing it they have increased it. And let me say in passing that when the right hon. Gentleman claims credit for his Government for having remitted taxation, they are collecting more from the pockets of the people than they have ever collected before. They have only been able to remit taxation because of the very remarkable prosperity which the country has enjoyed and which even our present fiscal system has not prevented this country from sharing with the rest of the world, though in a less degree than our most conspicuous competitors. How the right hon. Gentleman makes out remission to be £8,000,000 passes my comprehension. He did not do the sum, and if he will add up the amount the Chancellor of the Exchequer has remitted, he will find that it does not amount to £8,000,000.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: I was, of course, including this year.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: A million on tea, less than £3,500,000 on sugar, £2,000,000 on coal—which was not paid by any citizen of this country—and still you have not got your £8,000,000. [Several Hon. Members: The income-tax.] Then, say hon. Gentlemen, the income-tax. Yes; but when the late Chancellor of the Exchequer remitted a portion of the income-tax to a portion of the income-tax payers he demanded compensation which he took in death duties. There was no net reduction, and the Postmaster-General was talking only of net reduction.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: There are other small taxes.

Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The net reduction is not £8,000,000. That is certain. And let me just say, as I had to allude to the increase of the death duties in this connection, that in fact the late Chancellor of the Exchequer got an extra £1,500,000 by what I may call a happy mistake. He estimated that, owing to the concessions he made to earned income-tax payers under certain conditions, he would lose £1,500,000, and he took £1,500,000 from the big estates in death duties. As a matter of fact he lost nothing by his concessions, because, as he boasted this year, he actually got more from the income-tax than he had ever received before. Instead of making a remission to the direct taxpayer, he has added to his burden to the tune of £1,500,000 a year. I say that the remissions which have been made have only been possible because of the exceptional prosperity which we have enjoyed in the last two or three years. But what about the future? The Chancellor of the Exchequer said across the Table the other night that there would be no further remission of taxation while he held office. Admittedly he will have to find fresh revenue from somewhere. Our present resources are not equal to the liabilities that have been incurred. I know that there are a great number of hon. Gentlemen opposite—I am not certain that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is not to be counted among them—who are prepared to make reductions in the Army and Navy Estimates, *coute que coute*, no matter what happens. There are Gentlemen inside this House, and, I suppose, outside it, so foolish as that. But that is not the attitude of the Government, and, though the Chancellor of the Exchequer warmly commended the speech of the right hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division the other day, and particularly regretted that so few of his colleagues had listened to it, as it was spoken to them quite as much as to the House at large, the Prime Minister has pledged himself to maintain the naval supremacy of this country, whatever the cost and whatever the efforts of rival nations to overtake us. At the same time nearly every social measure brought in throws a fresh charge on the State. A great many of them throw a charge on the local rates, but also some charge on the Imperial taxes. The particular measure associated with the introduction of the Budget, involves a new liability of at least £6,000,000, and probably, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer says, nearly £7,000,000, without any alteration in the Government scheme of our finances in the near future. In reviewing these liabilities the other day I said that they amounted at a moderate estimate to over £10,000,000 of fresh expenditure to be faced next year. I believe that to be a very moderate estimate, if any fair interpretation is to be attached to the Prime Minister's language in regard to the Navy. What we are entitled to ask the Government is that, when they invite us to undertake these vast new liabilities which overshadow our deliberations this year and will overweigh the Budget next year, they should tell us by what means they intend to raise the money to meet the expenditure they now ask us to sanction. The Prime Minister scoffs at that as a thoroughly unreasonable proposition, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer says that he is not going to say what his next year's Budget is to be. But the Postmaster-General said, not to the Government who are now voting expenditure, but to an Opposition who, according to hon. Gentlemen opposite, are not going to be in power for a long time, that he was fully entitled to ask what taxes the Opposition were going to put on. But if it is reasonable for a Government to ask that of an Opposition, surely it is much more reasonable for an Opposition to ask the Government as to its intentions.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: After all, we are dealing with the Amendment, and the whole point of the Amendment is that this House regrets that no attempt is made to increase the resources of the Exchequer by broadening the basis of taxation. So far as the Government are concerned, they have dealt with the finances for three years, and their position is a clear one. The right hon. Gentleman proposes to broaden the basis of taxation. We want to know how he is going to do it.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I know that the right hon. Gentleman wants to know, but what is so exquisitely funny is that he does not see the humour of the situation. He, a responsible Minister, says that it is absurd for us to call on him for a disclosure of his plans, and in the next breath he turns round to ask the Opposition, who have no responsibility whatever, to disclose theirs. What is the right hon. Gentleman's excuse? It is that we are dealing with the Amendment. Well, Sir, I am dealing with the Budget, and really it would have been better if the right hon. Gentleman could have said a few words in defence of the Budget. I would not have asked much, but a few words would have been of interest. The right hon. Gentleman asks not merely what taxes in general we are going to put on, but for the details. I am more modest than he. Even in addressing a question to the Government I do not ask for the details of next year's Budget, but what are the general principles on which you are proceeding, and the general intentions in your minds and the general lines along which you intend to proceed? What do I mean by general lines? I will illustrate it by two references to the speeches of the Prime Minister, and I will ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to explain how the Government intend to carry out the policy the Prime Minister announced or why they have abandoned it. The Prime Minister last year, in contemplation of having to introduce an old-age pensions scheme, said—

> "The practical conclusion to which I have come is that I must not permanently impair my sources of revenue in view of the future."

And so much importance did he attach to that statement that he repeated the words twice over. Now we are a year closer to the liabilities that old-age pensions bring about. Then the right hon. Gentleman thought it necessary to reserve a nest-egg of what he estimated at £2,500,000 to start the scheme. Now he starts the scheme with the admitted liability of £6,000,000 or £7,000,000, and at the same moment he does impair, I suppose he must permanently impair, and diminish the revenue he actually enjoys by the remission of half the sugar duty and balances his Budget with an estimated surplus of only £200,000. What common principle underlies the action of the Prime Minister last year and that of this year when he introduces a Budget framed on totally different lines, and why has he forsaken the safe and proper course he took last year in maintaining all the resources he had available when he had such heavy liabilities coming on him in the future? The Postmaster-General gave in advance one answer to that question. He said that the right hon. Gentleman, having a surplus, would not have done his duty if he had not remitted taxation. But then he did not do his duty last year. Really, the Postmaster-General is not a very skilful defender of the Government when he does undertake to defend it. His defence for the action of this year is a condemnation of the action of last year, because if it is not right for the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he has a surplus to retain it to meet a known liability it cannot have been right for him to retain his surplus last year for the same purpose. That was the reason the Prime Minister gave. The right hon. Gentleman said he could not afford to impair his revenue by these new liabilities, and if they wanted all these reforms they could not expect remissions of taxation. He has chosen a remission of ¼d. per pound off the sugar tax after stating that it would be no earthly good to the consumer, although he made a frank admission of his change of opinion. The right hon. Gentleman has a singular facility for adapting his economic views to the objects which he desires to pursue at the moment. When he wants to take 1d. off tea that reduction goes straight to the consumer. When he does not want to take 1d. off tea the reduction does not go to the consumer. When he does not want to take anything off sugar he solemnly declares that the remission can be of no benefit to the consumer; and then, again, this year, when he wants to remit ¼d., he finds that the consumer will reap the whole benefit. We should like a little explanation of this changed attitude. I come to a later date, a speech of the Prime Minister's at Lancaster at the beginning of this year, in which he said that, so far as the money for a scheme of old-age pensions was drawn from taxation, it must be a scheme to which all classes of the community, including the working classes, make a just and adequate contribution. I think that those are proper lines on which such a scheme should be framed, but who can pretend that this Budget follows these lines? You impose for the benefit of the poorest classes an additional burden upon the Exchequer, and, therefore, upon the taxpayer, of at least £6,000,00 a year, and you choose that very moment to remit rather more than half of one of the few taxes that the poorest among us need pay. How can you say that, in bringing in this boon of old-age pensions and at the same time remitting part of the tax which is paid by the working classes, you are exacting a contribution from the working classes to the new expenditure? I asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day a question intended to give us some guidance as to what was the contribution of members of the working classes to the national expenditure at the present time. I asked him what is the amount of indirect taxation which it is estimated will be collected per head of the population in the coming year. He says the amount is £1 6s. 11d. per head on the only taxes to which those who are not payers of income-tax contribute at all. Then I asked him to go a step further and say how much of this was due to alcohol and tobacco. The amount due to alcohol is 16s. 1d., and, therefore, any one who refrains from alcohol, as a great many do, from either choice or necessity, has his contribution at once reduced to 10s. 10d. And, if he be not a smoker—and I think not a few total abstainers from alcohol very likely are also abstainers from tobacco—his total contribution, estimated in this way, would be 4s. 7d. in the course of the year. That is the position to which the Prime Minister's Budget reduces the contribution of the working classes. Does the Prime Minister think that it would be a sound system of finance to confine the whole contribution of working men below the income-tax limit to taxes on alcohol and tobacco which many of them do not pay at all? The total amount to a man who does not drink alcohol or smoke tobacco is 4s. 7d. That you may take as the compulsory charge. Alcohol and tobacco form a voluntary charge which a man in some sort assesses upon himself. Instead of calling upon the working classes for a contribution to the new expenditure imposed by this Budget, as the right hon. Gentleman was understood to say that he would do at Lancaster, he has reversed his policy and contributes the boon free, and in addition remits a part of the contribution. [MINISTERIAL cheers.] And for my part, whether it is popular doctrine or not—and I see from the cheers of hon. Gentlemen opposite that they think it is not unpopular—I would go to my own constituents or to any other body of electors and justify my position that those who share all the rights of citizenship, those for whom a very large portion of this expenditure is incurred, those who have a controlling voice in our electoral system, ought to pay a substantial contribution according to their means towards the national expenditure. [AN HON. MEMBER: They are doing.] To take up any other line is to reduce our politics to the lowest level of corruption, to issue an invitation to those prepared to embark in such a reckless scheme to out-bid one another; offering more and more, and to teach the people of this country, as none of the previous Liberal Ministers of Finance has cared to do, that they may call the tune while they leave others to pay the piper. We are entitled to press the Government, especially after the attitude taken up by the Postmaster-General, for an explanation of their attitude and intentions.

I am not going on behalf of the Opposition into an elaborate scheme of duties for a future Budget. I am not at all reluctant to discuss the merit of preference, or of a complete reform of our fiscal system. I have discussed it several times in this House, and hope to discuss it again. I was, however, glad to note that the Postmaster-General recognised what had always been denied by the Prime Minister, that by such a system we should get fresh contributories and not merely fresh taxes, not merely that we should tax more articles, but more people. It was an interesting admission from the Postmaster-General of the soundness of the argument that, if we charge a moderate toll for the advantage of using our markets, we shall be able to secure a reasonable contribution from the foreigners who come here to trade.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: Not from the foreigner.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The right hon. Gentleman said we might get more people to pay taxes. At the present time every person in this country pays taxes. We have, therefore, to get some body from outside. I do not suppose the Postmaster-General saw the meaning of his remark, but it is an interesting admission that I wish to take note of.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: It was no admission at all. I was saying that by a simple system of taxation you tax a few articles and the consumer pays upon a few things, but that if you broaden that, it would lead to great discomfort to the consumer. In so saying, I was not thinking of broadening the basis in order to include the foreigner.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I do not know what the right hon. Gentleman was thinking of, but I do know the words he used, and he will find in the official report these words—

> "You will touch a much larger number of taxes and a much larger number of taxpayers."

Well, everybody in this country contributes to the taxes now by consumption—at any rate everybody except paupers. Then the right hon. Gentleman thought that he had disposed of our solution of the question by saying that if we had such a tariff as was foreshadowed by my right hon. friend at Birmingham and on many other occasions, we might divert trade and correct the character of our trade to the advantage of our people, but that we could not at the same time raise revenue. If by a reformed tariff you secure increased employment here and the investment of fresh capital; if, in short, you regard the trade of the country as a whole, and do for it what it is the glory of the present Chancellor of the Exchequer to have done for a small part of it, you would find that these people, finding employment and earning good wages, would spend their money on some taxable articles which contribute to your indirect taxation, and the manufacturers of them would have to pay their share in income-tax. If you got nothing but what would produce those results the revenue would still be advantaged. But is it not sufficient to answer the Postmaster-General by inviting him to devote a couple of hours study to the course of the foreign trade of Germany and the United States, since they each adopted a very effective system of industrial protection? They have not reduced their exports, but they have not reduced their imports either; on the contrary, as their prosperity at home has increased, so their imports have increased, and they are enabled to demand those larger supplies from foreign countries because of their increased wealth and of the increased prosperity which industrial protection has brought. I say, therefore, that the establishment of such a system as my right hon. friend has suggested would bring a direct increase of revenue through the Customs duties and an indirect increase of revenue from the prosperity which would be brought to the industrial community at large. While we have indicated the way in which the increased revenue, which is admittedly required, can best be produced, the Government have given us no indication, and before this debate closes we ought to have some.

I must say a word before I sit down with special reference to local taxation. The right hon. Gentleman let his imagination stray more at large when he described what the Government had done to give relief to local taxation, and what the late Government had not done. He said the late Government had done nothing and, being met with a murmur of surprise, he said we had only succeeded in giving doles to the wrong people. Yes, we used to hear a great deal about that in the late Parliament. But even in the late Parliament Liberal Members for county constituencies with an agricultural vote were very shy of giving effective expression to it. The Government have been three years in power, and if we gave the doles to the wrong people they have had the opportunity of altering the system; without finding any money they might have given the doles to the right people. The fact of the matter is that that Act stands on a much more solid foundation than they would readily admit. While they pretty well pledged themselves to its repeal when in Opposition, they now attempt to carry it on from year to year in the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill, lest a worse fate should befall them. I think agricultural Members would have been very interested on behalf of their constituents to hear the considerable steps that the Postmaster-General says have been taken in relief of local taxation. Last year he said the Chancellor of the Exchequer simplified the national accounts. Pretty poor relief to a farmer who is paying rates! Then he says the Government have pledged themselves to introduce a Bill for the reform of assessment and valuation. Well, they have pledged themselves to introduce so many, and whether they will pass them or not is still in the lap of the gods. Then the third thing the Postmaster-General said the Government had done was to introduce a scheme of old-age pensions, and that would bring some relief. I venture to think that that is a mistaken idea. I am in favour of an old-age pensions scheme, but I have always held that we should save very little in poor relief from the adoption of any such proposal. Because, after all, the great expense of the Poor Law is, as regards the aged, for the infirm, who will have to continue to be treated in infirmaries because they cannot get suitable treatment in their own houses, and in the maintenance of the great buildings and establishments, the cost of which cannot be largely affected by any reduction that we are likely to see in the number of the inmates. The right hon. Gentleman's final step was that they were awaiting the Report of the Poor Law Commission and hoped to carry a Poor Law reform. That is a pretty poor record of anything accomplished in the course of the three years that they had been in office, and it postpones to an indefinite period any relief in the future. Meanwhile this problem is growing more urgent, and year by year this House puts additional burdens on the local authorities by the legislation which it carries, and inventions, improvements, and the changes of our civilisation themselves entail heavier cost upon them. It is an urgent question. It is another of those great liabilities which, every one admitting, the Government make no provision for; and it is because they are treating it as they are treating the question of defence, old-age pensions, and the whole range of politics—postponing as long as possible all action, and when they take action postponing their liabilities as far as they can to future years—that I shall heartily support the Amendment of my hon. friend as the expression of an opinion that the basis of the Budget is unsound, and that its finance is not of the character that a wealthy nation of this kind ought to pursue; and that it is urgently necessary, in order that we may adequately meet the great demands that are falling upon us, that the taxation of the country should be reformed upon the lines that the Leader of the Opposition has proposed.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.) said but for the interpretation which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire had given to the official Amendment, he would have had no hesitation in voting for it, or if he would be good enough to adopt the words of the Amendment of which he himself had given notice in favour of the broadening of the basis of taxation within the limits of the present fiscal policy of the country. He wished to preface his remarks by saying, lest he might be suspected of carping and ungenerous criticism, that no one appreciated more than he did the difficulties under which this year's Budget had been produced. No one appreciated more than he did the strain and stress under which the right hon. Gentleman must have worked in the peculiar circumstances in which he had been placed. That being so, he would modify to a considerable extent much of the criticism which otherwise he would have ventured to offer. He could not help thinking that the very fact that the Budget had been produced under strain and stress explained one or two features of it which otherwise would have been startling. On the occasion of last year's Budget they were certainly led to believe that this year at least the Government would have indicated a new source of revenue in the form of a considerably graduated income-tax. He had by his side the references in *Hansard* to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Prime Minister, but he would not quote them unless challenged to do so by the right hon. Gentleman. What they were told then was that it was impossible contemporaneously with differentiation to undertake so great a strain as would be involved on the Departments in carrying out a scheme of graduation. The right hon. Gentleman said he would reserve his opinion as to the practicability of the scheme, but he ended up by saying that for that year at least they must be content with differentiation. Without going into the details of graduation, it was self-evident that a scientific, just, and equitable system of graduation of income-tax would inflict hardship on nobody, and by taxing people with abnormal incomes under such a scheme he believed there would be an additional yield of the income-tax of £15,000,000 or £20,000,000 a year. There was another Budget statement last year, in respect to which they were certainly led to anticipate legislation. The then Chancellor of the Exchequer referred to what he termed the luxury of the motor-car, and he said it was one of those luxuries which tended to degenerate into a nuisance. They were certainly led to believe that this year something in the nature of new taxation on motor-cars would be imposed. He regretted that the Prime Minister, in the great stress under which he was working, had not had time to introduce that necessary and just amendment of our fiscal policy. He complained also that the House was led to expect last year that the Government had already set apart £1,500,000 for old-age pensions as a special nucleus, in addition to what was expected to be received from the arrears of income-tax. The House was led to expect last year that quite apart from the problematical £750,000 of arrears of income-tax, £1,500,000 had been ear-marked and kept free for old-age pensions. He asked the present Chancellor of the Exchequer what had become of that £1,500,000. Last year the Prime Minster, when dealing with his estimated surplus for the current year, and having reduced it to £1,800,000, mentioned that he proposed to keep the £330,000 in hand for emergencies, the right hon. Gentleman then used these words:—

> "As regards the other £1,500,000 I propose to add it to the new Sinking Fund; I am not going to part with revenue; I shall need this money for the future; I shall need it next year. In the meantime I make the best investment of it I know, by diminishing *pro tanto* our national obligations."

Later on the right hon. Gentleman, speaking of the provision for old-age pensions, said—

> "I shall have in hand next year free and ear-marked for that purpose, the £1,500,000 to which I have just referred."

That was a specific undertaking to the House. He had recently asked the present Chancellor of the Exchequer how it was proposed to deal with that sum, and he was told, with all seriousness, that the £1,500,000 had gone to the reduction of Debt; that what the Prime Minister had promised was not that that particular sum should be ear-marked for old-age pensions, but the produce of future taxation, and that alone. Every expectation, therefore, based on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement had been nullified; and this sum of £1,500,000 had disappeared into that vortex, the Sinking Fund, which was already, he thought, surfeited with contributions which might very well have been left to posterity. Last year the Prime Minister, when somebody asked how could he get back the £1,500,000 ear-marked for old-age pensions, and which had gone into the Sinking Fund, said, "You can easily get it back by legislation." And in reply to a question from the hon. Member for Montgomery, he said,

> "I cannot take it back myself, but the House can. It will be for the House to decide."

But there was not a word this year about legislation, and he hoped that the Government would redeem the expectation held out last year and recover this £1,500,000 which would be sorely needed for the Pension Fund. Dealing with the question of national expenditure, he started with the reflection that that expenditure reached the enormous figures of £150,000,000. He could not help remembering that one ground on which he secured election to this House was embodied in a political handbill, a copy of which he still possessed, in which it was pointed out that the expenditure of the country had risen within the past few years by £50,000,000, and that it would be one of the first duties of a Liberal Government to restore expenditure to its old level. He asked himself—laying aside the Army expenditure, which he hoped never to understand, and the Navy expenditure, remembering only that we were a tight little island and that our Navy should be equal not only to the two-Power standard, but to the all-world standard—what was the expenditure on the Civil Service? He found it amounted to £30,500,000. He implored the Government to check this enormous expenditure by strengthening the hands of the Public Accounts Committee and empowering it to pay personal visits to all the Departments, and see whether this £30,500,000 could not be reduced to sensible proportions. He maintained that every bit of work at present done by the Civil Service at a cost of £30,500,000 could be contracted for at a saving of at least £10,000,000 if put into the hands of business men. That was capable of being dealt with by a revision of the constitution and an extension of the powers of the Public Accounts Committee. That Committee should have power to check expenditure, to check the work of public servants, their hours of work, and the whole circumstances under which the Civil Service was conducted. With regard to revenue, he did not think, in view of the claims put forward in support of some of their legislative projects, that the Government had made sufficient allowance for the decrease of revenue that might be expected from the alcoholic group of taxes. No one had a more profound admiration than he for the financial genius of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, but he had no faith in the right hon. Gentleman's power to foretell how many millionaires would die during the current year and his estimate of an increase in his income from that source. Admittedly next year they would have, according to the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, to provide £7,000,000, and to the late Chancellor of the Exchequer £6,000,000 for old-age pensions. Then there was the possible large additional Naval expenditure, all amounting, with other items, to £10,000,000. The Chancellor of the Exchequer the other day said that they must not anticipate next year's Budget; but the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said, in the course of his Budget speech—

> "The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in other words, ought to budget, not for one year only, but for several years."

That statement was his justification for the inquiry as to how they were to get this additional £10,000,000. He was personally free from embarrassment, nor did he look to fiscal reform. He was not concerned as to how far that might or might not remedy the evils of unemployment and improve home industry, but as a source of revenue it was utterly fallacious. The foreigner would never consent to pay our expenses. He wished to confine himself to our present fiscal policy and would indicate where £50,000,000 additional revenue could be obtained without trouble or inconvenience, and without doing injustice to anyone. He hoped to have the effectual sympathy of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. Hitherto the "sympathy" he had received was like that of the gentleman who, if he saw a beggar eating a crust of bread would cross the road and offer to share it with him. He would refer very briefly to the suggestion by which he hoped to get £50,000,000 without even involving the necessity of touching the Sinking Fund. He would not elaborate the figures, but simply say that by a super-tax on enormous incomes it was possible to raise a very large revenue. Another proposal that he pressed on the Chancellor of the Exchequer was this. An old-age pension was merely a recognition that the old labourer, when unable to work, was entitled to have paid to him by the State some portion of the unpaid increment of his labour during the time that he was able to work. His suggestion, therefore, was that every employer of labour should pay 1d. per £ on the wages paid by him to his workpeople towards a fund earmarked for old-age pensions. Such a tax was easily collectable and would realise £4,000,000 or £5,000,000. There was no objection to this suggestion from an economic point of view; the tax would cost little in the way of collection, and it would inflict no hardship on the employer. It might be said that that incidence would fall upon the workpeople, but that was a matter for discussion between the workmen through their organisations and the employers. He had another suggestion to offer to his right hon. friend. In this he might be told that he had become inoculated with the bacillus of tariff reform, but he was convinced that without violating any principle of free trade it was practicable, possible, right, and proper that his right hon. friend should place a heavy super-tax on all incomes derived from foreign investments. He was not going into economic theories, but he would make himself responsible for the statement that while it might or might not be true that the imports of capital in the shape of commodities were, for commercial convenience, paid for in exports, the principle ceased to apply when they exported liquid capital. Let him put it in this form. A man sent £10,000 of his capital abroad for the building of docks, in some place where all the necessary labour and material were locally available. This export benefited the people abroad and deprived those at home of the advantage resulting from the use of the capital. But apart from that it was notorious among all persons connected with business in the City that in recent years there had grown up a system under which wealthy men who owned foreign investments sent their coupons abroad to be cleared and avoided the payment of income-tax upon them. He was speaking the other day to a Member of the Upper House who gloated over the fact that any addition to the income-tax would not affect him, because he sent his coupons over to Paris, where his agents collected them and invested the money, thereby avoiding the payment of income-tax altogether. He submitted that persons possessed of vast wealth, who claimed the protection of the State, lived under its laws, and shared its benefits, ought to contribute more liberally to the revenue of the country than those whose investments were all made at home. He saw opposite the junior Member for the City of London, who boasted in this House that he was the chairman of a trust company every penny of whose capital was invested abroad, and he could not help thinking that it was high time that this company should be made to pay some additional contribution to the expenses of the country for giving it the protection of its laws and prestige. That was his suggestion, and it was quite compatible with the interests of free trade. But he did not care whether it was compatible or not, because such a contribution as he had indicated would mean an income of £10,000,000 a year to this country. Again, what was to prevent the Chancellor of the Exchequer from adopting the principle followed in France and other countries of taxing advertisements and high-priced theatre tickets? We should copy some of France's wise institutions instead of trying to learn to speak bad French. That would be a much better compliment to the entente cordiale. Let the Chancellor of the Exchequer, therefore, follow the example of France and tax all entertainments, receiving by way of revenue what was known there as the "Right of the poor." In that way he would obtain another £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 and no one would be a penny the worse. Then, again, why should the right hon. Gentleman shy at taxing the gambling instincts of the community? He taxed their drink, their playing cards, and their premium bonds, which the Postmaster-General said were lottery bonds and would not allow to go through the post; but his right hon. friend shied at a tax on betting, on racing, and on bookmakers, because, he said, to tax these things meant the giving of a validity to betting. Did a tax on playing cards give a validity to baccarat? Did a tax on drink validate drinking? To his nervous friends he would hint that they might adopt the cry of the temperance reformers, who justified the drink taxes on the plea that they wished to tax the thing out of existence. One and a half millions of money obtained from these sources in Paris alone went to the benefit of the poor, and there was a big revenue to be obtained from them in this country. He was amazed also that another suggestion had not been adopted. There had grown up in this country a vast enterprise in joint stock companies. Why, then, not put a tax on every share certificate of a joint stock company when it was first issued and whilst the owner was full of hope and joy—even though in the end the scrip did prove worthless, and in that respect, as a diminishing security, followed the example of Consols. But a small tax on share certificates would bring into the Exchequer £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 a year without inflicting hardship on anyone, and, like the premium bonds of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, give the holders of the stock an idea that there was really something behind them, and it would be easy of collection. He was so full of ideas that he hardly knew what to suggest next. He had already secured between £40,000,000 and £50,000,000 for the Exchequer, and he would offer one other suggestion. At present there was in the possession of the banks of this country a sum of money so vast that no one had really any data to enable him to fix the exact amount. This money was in the shape of "dormant balances," remaining in the hands of the bankers upon old accounts which had not been operated upon for years, or in the shape of unclaimed dividends. Many of the palatial buildings which adorned the City to-day had been built out of these "dormant balances," which, in a moral sense, were no more the property of the companies than of the man in the street. He pressed upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer the importance of introducing a short Bill calling upon banking institutions to disgorge all balances lying dormant in their hands after a stated number of years. The Public Trustee had not much to do at present, and he might very well be made the legal custodian of all these funds. If this reform were carried out it would bring into the coffers of the State £100,000,000. [" Oh, oh."] Well, he could tell his friend that £30,000,000, at any rate, could be got from London bankers alone, and he would be glad to give the Chancellor of the Exchequer the facts privately. £3,500,000 was in the hands of one well-known and highly respected private bank, and there could be no doubt that the amount in the whole of the banks of the country would aggregate £100,000,000. The right hon. Gentleman could at least intercept the interest of the money, and if the capital were ever claimed those who proved their right to it were much more likely to get it from the State than from those who quibbled and pleaded the Statute of Limitations. In truth, there was plenty of money knocking about for a new Chancellor of the Exchequer. There were at least £50,000,000 to be obtained from various sources of taxation, and nearly all capable of collection by stamp duties. In these circumstances he hoped that he would receive from his right hon. friend the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom he wished to thank for listening to him so courteously, a less monotonous and less official reply than had been hitherto customary. He thanked the House for allowing him to throw out these suggestions and would conclude as he began by recognising the special difficulties of the Government this year and saying that, personally, whatever might be the merits or demerits of this particular Budget, he should ever be grateful to the Prime Minister and the Government that they had had the courage to open the door of the National Treasury to those who by age, and age alone, were no longer able to contribute to its wealth.

*MR. BOWLES (Lambeth, Norwood) said that he would not attempt to follow the hon. Member for South Hackney in his interesting and far-reaching proposals for increasing the national revenue. He would leave that to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But he could not help feeling that the House had reason to be grateful to the hon. Member who moved the Amendment for the terms in which that Amendment was drawn, which enabled the general financial situation to be dealt with as a whole. The Postmaster-General had said that there were in his opinion three points which made the present Budget. There were old-age pensions, reduction of the sugar duty, and the proposals as regards the Debt. That was a natural and convenient line for a defender of the Budget to take. His own opinion, for what it was worth, was that the real and significant outstanding feature of the Budget was neither old-age pensions nor the reduction of the sugar duty. So far from these being the real outstanding features, they were merely clouds which obscured the real outstanding features. The real outstanding feature of the Budget was that it showed to demonstration—they now had it in black and white—either that the Government had failed even to try to redeem their clear pledges and to make good their clear statements made before the election and during the last two years, or that, finally and once for all, they were to understand that retrenchment of the public expenditure was impossible. This was a matter on which they were entitled to a serious and considered explanation on the part of the Government, in view of the language which hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite had held, and the attacks they had made on the late Government and their supporters in regard to national expenditure. The hon. Member who had just sat down had told them that one of the main appeals which he made to the people of South Hackney was as to national expenditure. That was an appeal made from ten thousand platforms, by Gentlemen opposite, up and down the country, and repeated again and again by right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench. The statements then made were to the effect that the late Administration had shown a most profligate and wasteful disregard of the resources of the country, and that if hon. Gentlemen opposite were returned to office that disregard would cease, and there would be retrenchment and economy. That appeal and those statements were made to willing ears. No doubt in 1905 the people, who had been under the strain of the war, were very ready to hear and disposed to believe—and in the end Gentlemen opposite induced them to believe—that during the few years preceding 1905 expenditure had been wasteful, wanton, and profligate. The people looked back for ten years, and saw what was perfectly true, that in that period the cost of the Army had increased from £20,000,000 to something like £33,000,000, or 60 per cent., while the cost of the Navy had gone up from £18,000,000 to no less than £38,000,000, or 110 per cent. in ten years. And they had been reminded from every platform in the country that concurrently with this enormous increase of expenditure on the Army and Navy, there was behind it all the great and growing total of the national liabilities of all descriptions. He was not concerned to say whether or not the fears and views of the majority of the people, certainly of Gentlemen opposite, were reasonable or proper. A great many people held the view that a great increase of national expenditure was inevitable. But that was not the view held in 1905–6. Rightly or wrongly, the people then clearly expressed their dissatisfaction with the rate at which expenditure had increased, and they thought that there must be retrenchment and economy. On the 2nd March last, the Prime Minister, in reply to an hon. Member behind him, who complained of the growing expenditure, said—

> "I quite agree that one of the heaviest counts in the indictment which many of us preferred against the late Administration is this: that during their term of office the expenditure on the Army and the Navy had enormously and unnecessarily increased. We are undoubtedly pledged to do everything in our power to effect some mitigation of that expenditure."

What had happened? It was not very easy to get at the exact figures of the cost of the Army or Navy, or of any Government service. If one wanted to find the real cost it was really very difficult to ascertain. But in this case the House was relieved from all doubt or difficulty, because on the 2nd March last, during the same debate to which he had referred, the Prime Minister gave to the House upon his own authority the figures relating to the growth of the real expenditure on the Army and Navy since 1904–5. Although he could not, for his part, make these figures quite tally in one or two particulars, yet he accepted them, and the House of course accepted them, at once. The right hon. Gentleman had told them, in set terms and in plain language, that during the two years for 1905–6 the expenditure on the Army and Navy had been reduced by £9,700,000, and that in the following years, 1907–8 and 1908–9, the expenditure would be reduced by only £3,500,000. On the right hon. Gentleman's own showing the total reduction made in this expenditure by two years of rigid Liberal economy was only about one-third of what had been effected in the preceding two years on the Estimates of a Unionist administration. And who in that House did not know as well as possible, and could anyone doubt it, that in the Estimates of the present year, low water mark had been reached in so far as expenditure on the Army was concerned? They knew that the Territorial Army, if successful, would add enormously to the cost of administration. It had been admitted by the Prime Minister himself that the Navy had been living out of capital, such for instance as the three years stores; and the right hon. Gentleman had given a pledge that the two-Power standard was to be maintained at whatever cost. In view of these facts it seemed impossible for anyone to doubt that the low water mark of expenditure on armaments had been reached. But even if the expenditure on the Army and the Navy were to stand still, the cost of the Civil Service of the country went on piling up at the rate of about a million and a half to two millions a year. He admitted that the Debt had been reduced, and he thought the Government were entitled to credit for that. But one was bound to make this observation, that in the language they heard about the Debt hon. Gentlemen opposite based themselves mainly upon what was mere anticipation. They always included what they hoped to do during the current year, and what they hoped to do in the current year bore a very large proportion to what they had done before. But right hon. Gentlemen opposite were entitled to the credit of having reduced the Debt at an unexampled rate, and that was really all that could be said for them; for, great though the rate of reduction had been, it would affect expenditure very little. In view of what hon. Gentlemen opposite had said up and down the country, they now found that they were really unable, after having done their best, to make any real diminution of expenditure on the Army, Navy, Civil Service, or in any Department. The expenditure which hon. Gentlemen opposite had denounced a few years ago was that to which they were practically and substantially bound to-day. In these circumstances, one would have expected at least that the Government would have re-doubled their efforts to pay off Debt, and would in any case have kept clear of any avoidable new expenditure. But the Government had not done so, and they were face to face with an inevitable and enormous increase of expenditure. In the financial circumstances of the Government, he was bound to say that it was a discreditable proposal that, without any direct authority from the electors, and in face of all that they had said at the election, they should spend £7,000,000 which they had not got, and did not know how they were going to get, upon a scheme which was certainly not going to rest at £7,000,000, and which must effect an enormous change in the whole social life of this country. That was the situation in which they stood. Retrenchment was over and done with. That to him was the real outstanding feature of the situation. On the other hand, liabilities were growing faster and faster, and the right hon. Gentlemen opposite, after two years of full control and rigid economy, would be forced, so far from decreasing the burdens upon the people, largely to increase them by means of taxation. The recommendation of the Amendment was that this inevitable increase in expenditure was to be met by broadening the basis of taxation. He sometimes thought that almost all trouble in this world arose from the use of metaphorical expressions, and he could not help thinking that hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House must often have re-echoed the anguished cry of the great Frenchman who said he prayed nightly to be delivered from the Evil One and from figurative language. He had done his best to understand precisely what the phrase "broaden the basis of taxation" connoted. There had been moments of gloom and depression in which the dark thought had sometimes occurred to him that perhaps it had no meaning at all. But those moods passed, and he had come to the conclusion that after all its meaning was simple enough, and that broadening the basis of taxation simply meant levying more taxes. It was an inevitable inference from the fact that what it meant was that it was proposed to levy more taxes. He was reading only the other day that during the Middle Ages they had an excellent system of dealing with recalcitrant taxpayers. If a man refused to pay the amount which had been assessed as his proper quota they put him in a press and applied weights to the top of the press progressively until he either paid or expired. He had no doubt that if figurative language had been as common and popular in those days as in these, and one had asked the mechanic who was applying the weights what he was doing, he would have said with great force and with literal accuracy that he was broadening the basis of taxation. But the question raised by the Amendment was what were the taxes, what was to be the form of the broadening, and on what principles was the broadening to proceed. He took the view that all taxes without exception were evil and bad. Of course, some were worse than others, but whether they were good or bad, they all had this in common, first of all that they were all paid, in fact, not by goods or by interests, but by individuals; and secondly, that however the tax was raised, in whatever form it might be presented, and on whomever it might strike first of all, in the end, inevitably and always, it fell on the whole mass and body of the people. That, if it were so, was a comforting reflection. However great might be the unfairness or iniquity of the Government, however unequal, one-sided, or biassed might be the apparent incidence of the tax, however strong might be the efforts to limit its incidence to a particular class, so great was the ingenuity of the people, so great and so strong was the play of natural law, that in the end it tended to diffuse itself more and more, and percolate deeper and deeper, so deep that no economist had ever been able to follow it, and every tax if they gave it time rested upon the shoulders which alone always must bear it—the shoulders of the mass of people as a whole, and therefore in the main of the working classes. The hon. Member for Blackburn the other day formulated a scheme for broadening the basis of taxation. He said that money was wanted for social reform, and there was nothing but to tax the rich, and let the poor go free. The hon. Member was the financier of the Labour Party, and he had no doubt would be the first Chancellor of the Exchequer in the first Labour Administration. But the hon. Member never had and never could explain how he was going to induce the capital which he desired to tax to stop in the country and be destroyed. He could not explain how he was going to take huge sums from the rich man, and insure that no injury should result to those who depended upon him. All schemes of that sort were vitiated at the root because their authors had never realised that in inflcting injury upon the rich or upon any one class they were really inflicting a far greater injury upon the mass of the people, because they had not realised that in the end every tax, every demand to take money out of the pockets of the people broadened down and that the whole people paid their share in the end. While it was true that all people paid, it was equally true that in this country, owing to our present basis of taxation, the great majority of the persons who contributed to the revenue did not realise that they were paying—or at any rate how much they were paying. In this Budget they were faced with a total expenditure which was said to be £154,000,000. As a matter of fact the figures of Budget statements were always incomplete, and he wished the right hon. Gentleman would consider whether he could not make a real complete account in his next Budget of the national finances as they stood by including at least the appropriations in aid and the other large sums which were entirely excluded. They were faced with an expenditure which was at least £164,000,000, every half-penny of which would be raised and spent. All that was provided by the mass of the people. How much of it was paid by people who knew what they were paying? Less than the odd £64,000,000, £63,180,000 alone of the whole total was represented by the income-tax, estate duties, stamp tax, land tax, house duty and the other direct taxes, and the remaining enormous sum of £100,000,000, every half-penny raised by customs, excise and non-tax revenue, was paid by persons who, as for the vast majority of them, did not realise, at any rate had no very strong temptation to realise, what they were paying. To his mind that really was becoming a serious danger. The people had the power to insist on great reforms and great changes and it was the people who paid for them. Frame taxes as they would, alter the basis as they chose, in the end it would be paid by those who had demanded it, and it was increasingly important that the present basis should be so altered, broadened if they liked to call it so, although in his belief the basis always remained the same—that those who demanded, at all costs and against all advice, schemes involving great expenditure, should feel that it was always upon themselves mainly that the burden of expense would fall. For his part, since the basis of taxation must be broadened, since new revenue must be found, he hoped the broadening would take place not in an increase of indirect but of direct taxation. There was no doubt that direct taxes stimulated as no others could a wholesome interest in political affairs, and would constitute a real incentive to prudent economy on the part of the electorate. Moreover, they left the activities and enterprise of the country free to develop, and only touched its resulting accumulations, which he believed to be the true principle. And, from the point of view of the revenue there was no question that they had an enormous advantage. He was told that the estate duty cost about 1 per cent. to collect, and the income-tax from 1 per cent. to 1½ per cent., while every £100 of customs duty cost £5 for collection. So that direct taxes being at least 4 per cent. cheaper to collect than indirect, if the money raised by indirect taxation in this very Budget could be raised, and he believed it could largely, by direct taxation, there would have been £2,500,000 clear saving to everybody concerned. It was said that the poor taxpayer was indisposed to take his part of the national burden unless it was concealed from him. He believed that was a gross libel upon the poor. If the rich man was ready to pay his share of the expenses of the country, it seemed to him to be monstrous to affect to believe that the poor man, who had more power in these days than the rich man, should be unwilling to do the same, and that was particularly so if, as was clearly the case, he would pay less rather than more under the system which he advocated. He admitted the difficulty of collecting, but he believed that that was difficulty which was not insuperable; and he earnestly commended these considerations to the Chancellor of the

Exchequer. He wished to add one word more with regard to another scheme for widening the basis of taxation which had been referred to. He thought it would ill become him at that moment to refer in detail to this other scheme, which he knew found favour with many of his hon. friends around him. He was, however, bound to add that for his part he was one of those who was returned to this House bound and pledged to resist two things (1) the imposition of any duty upon corn or meat; and (2) the establishment in this country of a general tariff of a protective character upon the German or the American model. That being so, if he thought it could even colourably be argued that the acceptance of this Amendment involved a support of either of these things he would never support it; he might even feel bound by his election pledges to resist it. But he did not think this either could or would be argued. The situation as he saw it was that this Government of retrenchment and economy had chosen to give up both, and instead, had plunged the country into a sea of new expenditure, the limits of which were utterly unknown. That expenditure had now to be faced and borne. Mainly, like all other expenditure, it would in fact be borne by the poorer classes of our people, who could least afford that strain. And it was in the hope that neither this nor any other Government would allow the people of this country to be deceived into the notion that they could foist off that strain either upon any particular class in this country, or upon any community of foreigners, but that the people would be allowed to face it honestly and bear it knowingly and with their eyes open, that he would support the Amendment of his hon. friend.

MR. WALSH (Lancashire, Ince) said he rose with considerable diffidence to take part in this discussion because it took the form of what was so frequently described as a full dress debate, and those who sat on the Labour Benches were not in the habit of participating at any length in such debates. He thought, however, that they had a right to know what was the real meaning of the Amendment. The Opposition Leaders had never, since they adopted the phrase "broadening the basis of taxation," given to the public any clear idea of the meaning they attached to it. In Germany where the "scientific tariff" had been applied remorselessly, the wages of the miner had gone up seventy-three marks a year; but the cost of his food had increased by 136 marks a year. At the trade union conferences held abroad the workers of all opinions were agreed upon one thing, that "broadening the basis of taxation" meant abstractions from the wages fund, intensifying the monopoly, tightening the grip of the capitalist on labour, and placing the working people more and more under the heel of the great syndicates and combinations of capital. It was officially admitted in Prussia that in consequence of the tariff applied during the last half dozen years the cost of living had gone up so much that 8¾ millions would need to be paid to the people in order to bring them back to the conditions of living before the tariff was imposed. Wherever they looked the same thing applied. They were told to go to America for an illustration. It was admitted by papers of high repute like the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Morning Post* and by the officials on the other side of the Atlantic in the Labour Department at Washington, that in America there was a large number of unemployed, thus proving that protection did not give "a lower income-tax and work for all." In April last there were 4¾ million trade unionists out of employment throughout the United States. Wages had recently gone down by 10 or 15 per cent. in the United States, and the cost of living had increased by 28 per cent. He could only interpret the proposal for broadening the basis of taxation as an attempt on the part of a party not long out of power, who never when in power touched any such problem as this, to trade upon the necessities and miseries of the people with a view to diverting their attention from the real causes of their troubles and to the firmer entrenchment of monopoly. He would quote to the House a short extract from Sydney Smith's speech upon the broad basis of taxation which existed in his time. He said:—

> "Taxes upon everything that is pleasant to see, hear, smell and taste. Taxes on heat, light and locomotion, taxes upon everything on the earth and the waters under the earth, on the brass nails of the coffin and the ribbons of the bride, at bed or at board, couchant or levant, we must pay. Taxes on the ermine which decorates the judge and the rope that hangs the criminal. The beardless youth

manages his taxed horse with a taxed bridle upon a taxed road, and the dying Englishman pouring his medicine which has paid 20 per cent. out of a phial which has paid 40 per cent. expires in the arms of an apothecary who has paid £100 for the privilege of putting him to death."

At that time there were taxes upon 1,800 articles. Since then it had been the almost continuous endeavour of every statesmen worthy of the name to give the people a free breakfast-table. The Labour Party were resolute in their determination to maintain and increase the present freedom of trade in this country, because they were absolutely convinced it was in the interest of the working classes. There were points in the Finance Bill which should receive a little more attention than they had hitherto. He would ask the Prime Minister where was the promise with regard to the firm foundations which the Government intended to lay this session for old-age pensions? He was a novice in this House, and not at all acquainted with the mysteries of high finance, but he would like to call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the words which he used. He said—

> "It is our intention before the close of the next session to lay firm the foundations of this urgent, long-delayed, and overdue reform. I shall have next year, free and earmarked for the purpose, a sum of £2,250,000 to provide the nucleus of a fund for the relief of necessitous old age."

These words were very definite. They conveyed to the Labour Party the impression that this year there would be at least £2,250,000 as the nucleus of a fund to provide for the claims of the necessitous in old age. Having listened to the remarks of the Prime Minister a few weeks ago, it seemed to him that the £2,250,000 had mysteriously disappeared, and that only £1,200,000 would be available on 1st January next year. Even the most indulgent critic could hardly say that 1st January next year would be before the close of this session, unless the House was to sit for a very long time. Many hon. Members in all parts of the House really thought that there would be at least £2,250,000 to be the nucleus of the fund for providing old-age pensions. While they were thankful for the beginning which had been made, and while the statesman who had made the start was worthy of very great credit indeed, he must say that the reasonable expectations they were led to indulge in last year had not been fulfilled. He wished to call attention to another point in connection with the sugar duty. Every Member of the Liberal Party voted against the continuance of the sugar duty last year. The Prime Minister last year used these words—

> "Objectionable as I have always thought it as a tax both on food of the poor and upon the raw material of several important industries, it is a duty with which you cannot deal piecemeal. If you were to halve the duty I do not think you would do any good whatever to the great bulk of consumers in the country. You might benefit certain trades in which sugar is a raw material, but I do not believe you would benefit the working classes or the consuming part of the community unless you get rid of the tax altogether."

Here again they were entitled to feel disappointed. They did not advance these objections in any churlish or captious spirit, but because before they came into this House they had been led to believe in the promises of statesmen. They were gradually undergoing the process of disillusionment, but still it ought to be placed to their credit that at one time they did believe in the good faith of statesmen. The right hon. Gentleman had done the very thing which he declared would be most objectionable.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I showed in my speech that the actual reduction which had been made has given relief to the consumers.

MR. WALSH said that so far as he had been able to ascertain the benefit was not going to the consumers at present. [AN HON. MEMBER: Yes.] Of course, that was a matter of opinion, and other people's experience might be different from his own. He wished to direct attention to the fact that the sugar tax was wholly paid by the consumer, and that it was admitted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to be objectionable. The portion of it which was still left amounted to £2,600,000 a year, or more than twice the amount which was to be devoted on 1st January next to the payment of old-age pensions. He thought that was a matter in which the right hon. Gentleman might have been a little more courageous. He might have taken his courage in both his hands and dispensed with the tax altogether. He and his friends thought the right hon. Gentleman had been a little too lenient in his treatment of those who possessed large estates, and that he had been by no means so generous as he ought to have been in his treatment of those who possessed little or nothing of this world's goods. The granting of old-age pensions to people at seventy years of age would only be felt by a most inconsiderable portion of the community. It was suggested that if they taxed very large incomes, they would break down the fund from which labour derived its source. The right hon. Gentleman in his Budget speech last year, speaking of the case of a man who left £1,000,000, said—

> "I do not know what you would do with such a man."

Those who were wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice, and beyond all human needs, ought to be taxed in order to meet the great, growing, and dire needs of the large bulk of the people. The payment of old-age pensions ought to begin five years earlier. Another point was that there was practically no provision made for the needs of unemployment. There was no increase of the grant of £200,000, though the percentage of unemployed was growing day by day. Among trade union members there was in April this year a percentage of unemployment of 7·5, a figure which had only once been exceeded in the last twelve years, namely in December, 1904, when it was 7·6. He and his friends believed that ampler provision ought to have been made for the unemployed. Without broadening the basis of taxation by putting greater burdens on the common people, those who had large incomes ought to be called upon to contribute in greater proportion to the overwhelming needs of the country. They had a courageous Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he might very well tackle the subject of the taxation of land values. It was too late to do it this session, but they threw it out as a hint worthy the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman. There was a great deal to be done with the taxation of land values. Figures had been supplied showing that the ground values in London alone had grown by over 200 per cent. during the last forty years. The same thing was taking place in every great centre of industry throughout the country. The taxation of land values had been upon the Liberal programme within his knowledge for eighteen years, and he thought it was about time they began to do business. They believed that without any broadening of the basis of taxation on the lines suggested by the Opposition, and without placing any additional burdens upon the common people—which, if he knew anything of the temper of the common people, they would resist to the death—they might, by tapping unearned incomes, and by placing a larger share of taxation upon these vast fortunes to which he had alluded, give greater attention and financial help to the unemployed, and so shape their Budget as to carry a message of hope to the people. Upon those lines the Labour Party were determined. They had, therefore, been compelled to disagree with the Budget as laid before the House, for they felt that upon those lines, and those lines only, was the true solution of pressing problems to be found.

*MR. HEMMERDE (Denbighshire, E.) said he could not hope to emulate the simplicity of the Member for Norwood in seeing no possible trace of fiscal reform in the Amendment, nor the financial ability of the hon. Member for Hackney in suggesting new sources of revenue out of which could be met the increasing expenditure; but he had been struck by the fact that until the last speaker, not a single word had been said about the taxation of monopolies, which was one of the cardinal planks in the Liberal Party's programme at the last election. It seemed to him that this question had had a most remarkable history in the programme of the Liberal Party. They came into office some three years ago, pledged, if ever they were pledged to anything, to the taxation of land values, which was certainly a ready means of broadening the basis of taxation. If the Amendment referred, as it clearly might do, to the taxation of land values, he for one should be prepared to vote for it; but one must take the Amendment according to the sense in which it was really intended, and he was therefore not prepared to support it, because it clearly referred to nothing of the sort. When they came into office they were faced with this question, and they were told a Land Valuation Bill was necessary before they could tackle it. That seemed to be a reason why in the first session they should have had a Land Valuation Bill, but they had not one. They expected one in the second session, but they never had it. To-day they were at last assured that a Bill for the valuation of the land of England would be produced within a very short time. Many of them were devoutly thankful for that assurance, but they had got to regard the matter from the point of view of practical politics, and, seeing what had happened to a previous measure leading up to the taxation of land values in Scotland, and knowing what was likely to happen in the House of Lords if an English Bill were passed through the House of Commons he wanted to consider for a moment if it were not possible through the Budget itself, without a preliminary valuation Bill, to tax land values. During the debate on the Licensing Bill they heard that, if that measure were thrown out, the Chancellor of the Exchequer might upon another occasion find himself able to proceed by way of high licences, and thus to get indirectly the remedy he was unable to get directly. If that were possible in one case, it might be possible in another. Under certain circumstances they at present, for instance, valued land at its selling price for the purpose of death duties; and, if they were faced with the House of Lords throwing out a Land Valuation Bill, he hoped they would use the powers they possessed. There was hardly a single item in the Government's programme that was not intimately connected with this reform. Last year, when the Small Holdings Bill was brought in, it was pointed out again and again how important the question of the valuation of land was in this connection. It would be the same with the Housing Bill, and all through the Government's programme of social reform. This great question of land values underlay everything. He did not want to quote the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had made many speeches, in Wales and elsewhere, upon this subject, and in which he had developed the taxation of land values as few other people had done, but he wished to quote the words of one who was always held to be a most moderate Member of the Liberal Party. The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had said—

> "I am sure that the party which first masters that question (the taxation of land values), which first makes it its own, which can show that it is really capable of dealing with it, and is not going to let itself be hampered by vested interests from exercising its intelligence upon it freely—that party will have a great and solid ground upon which to appeal to the country."

If they at once took action without suggesting Land Valuation Bills they would be on great and solid ground in which they might appeal to the people. It was upon the taxation of monopolies that they went to the country at the last election, and upon the taxation of monopolies the Government ought at any rate to do something in accordance with their pledges. The hon. Member for Norwood had pointed out with some truth that one party was proposing to tax the rich and let the poor go free; and he pointed out the danger of taxing wealth so as to drive it out of the country and that in taxing wealth they taxed industry. If those were the hon. Member's views, he ought to be able to claim him as an adherent to his suggestion, because such objection did not apply to the taxation of monopolies. No one could take his land out of the country, and no economist of any repute would suggest that a tax upon land values would have the effect of actually raising rents in the country. In the taxation of land values they had a tax which would remain where they imposed it and which would not filter through the rich down to the poor. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcester had told them that it was quite impossible to find out how much the working class family now paid in taxation. That might possibly be the case. He gave certain figures pointing out how taxes affected the poor at the present time. He remembered the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, when he first tried to find out how much the ordinary man with £1 a week paid to taxation, gave them the figure of 1s. 7d. He did not know whether the process of broadening the basis of taxation had for its object the increasing of that to some higher sum;

but surely the man with £1 per week only ought to pay considerably less than 1s., and the taxation ought to be put on the shoulders of those who could afford it. Though to-day some of his supporters seemed to be a little timid, the foundation upon which the right hon. Gentleman proposed to stand was indirect taxation, beginning, at least, with a 5 per cent. tax on all food and a 10 per cent. tax on all manufactured articles. Whether he was likely to increase the 1s. 7d. paid by the man in receipt of £1 per week to 2s. or nearly 3s., it was perfectly obvious they were going to begin, not to put taxes on the rich and let the poor go free, but to put most of the taxes on the poor and let the rich go free. The indirect taxation, on which protection was based, would not have the effect of increasing industry so that the poor could get any indirect advantage out of the system. They were, of course, told that, although they would increase the taxes upon them, they would give them more employment and more wages; but, as a matter of fact, the right hon. Gentleman put forward a refutation of the argument himself at once, because he pointed out that, if they gave a man 1s. per week more by taxing him less, they would at once raise the amount of employment in the country and develop industry. If they so altered their taxes as to take them off food, it was obvious they were going to do a great deal for the development of the industries of the country. Mr. Carnegie said not long ago that, if they altered their taxation so as to give the majority of the people £1 a year more to spend, they would do more to develop industry than by any other method. They were faced with three alternatives. They had either to increase the taxes upon the poor, which was protection; or increase the present taxes upon the rich, which, although it might have a very lawful object and excellent effect, must to some extent be a penalisation of industry, or they could put taxes upon monopolies and the wealth of the people without in doing so penalising industry. By the last alternative they would put their taxes upon the wealth created by the people and get back for the people the wealth they had created. Of course, they were told there were certain difficulties. That was, no doubt, a reason why they should proceed cautiously at first, but it was no reason why there should not be at least a small revenue tax, or why taxation should not be so devised that it would absorb all future land values or why a land tax should not be put on all unoccupied land. If a start was made there a great deal would be done for the revenue and to stimulate industry. People said it was unfair to tax a monopoly, but was it not equally unfair to leave in private hands what ought to belong to the public? That point was very well put by a well-known writer, who recently said—

> "Until the State has resumed what it never had the right to give away to any individual, its right to the fund created by its own existence and its own endeavour, it must do what is devoid of any moral sanction, deprive individual citizens of the result of their own individual labour."

What was the position to-day? A man could not be made rich, unless he was a producer, without making others poorer, and to-day we were allowing these people to become rich. They were thriving on the needs and labour of the people. The Government did not seem to be giving to this question the attention it deserved. The Liberal Party had won many seats on this question. It had been fought all over the country, and in bringing this matter into prominence they had had the support of the Government and had quoted many of the speeches of right hon. Gentlemen who sat on the front bench. He thought that Government owed it to the party to take up this question seriously. They owed it to the party because many of them did not wish to have their pledges thrown in their faces, but they also owed it to the nation when they were face to face with this great expenditure. Of the three courses lying to their hand, there were only two that they could follow. They could tax earned or they could tax the unearned wealth, a thing which he suggested the Government had already shown a desire to do, by the differentiation in the income-tax between earned and unearned incomes. One hon. Member had said that he would support an old-age pension scheme from a fund contributed to by all. What better fund could there be than that provided by land values? When they came face to face with this great expenditure for social needs (and he did not think it was too great—he thought that twice and thrice as much could be afforded for old-age pensions), they had to find some sources of revenue which were capable of great development. He appealed to the House in the eloquent words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—

> "There is a trade untouched in your midst which would bring back to the wealth of England £250,000,000 per annum, and that trade you might win, not by colonising South African deserts, not by forcing civilisation upon unwilling people at the point of the bayonet, but by reclaiming the land of England from the trammels of a bygone age."

£250,000,000 might be a large estimate. The hon. Member for North Paddington thought it was too much, but here was a huge value created by the public and growing daily, and yet it was left by the Opposition for a gamble of a farthing or a halfpenny on the food of the people. That seemed to him a paltry thing, and he preferred to stand by the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who was preaching then the same cause as he (Mr. Hemmerde) and those who thought with him were preaching to-day. He hoped the Government would be able to give this matter the attention it deserved and do something to assuage the bitter disappointment of the land reformers in this House. He asked the Government, in considering the question of the broadening of the basis of taxation, to do what they could to put Liberal finance on a suitable basis, on a basis that was easily understood, and one that could be put before business men and set against the attractions of fiscal reform. He asked for a lead in this matter and that the Government should, in refusing to tax the poor, at the same time come down to this great revenue that was made by the poor. Let them base all these schemes of social reform for the benefit of the poor on the wealth that the poor created, and in that way, and that way alone, let the poor make their contribution. The Liberal Party was pledged to take off not the half but the whole of the sugar tax, and to reduce the tea tax, if not to abolish it. They were not justified in keeping up these taxes when they had a huge revenue capable of being appropriated to their removal. He appealed to the Government to do what they could by their finance, not only to take the tax off production but in every other way they could, by other taxes, to assist production by giving not only free trade to this country, but freedom to produce under a careful system of land reform, which he believed could be obtained ultimately, if not directly, by the Budget.

*MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) said he would not attempt to follow the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down nor would he attempt to argue with him the question of land values, but he would point out that the hon. and learned Member had overlooked the fact that both Mr. Gladstone and Sir William Harcourt were among those who held the firm conviction that the taxation of land values ultimately and invariably fell upon the tenant. He desired to confine his remarks to that part of the Amendment which referred to local taxation. The Postmaster-General had commented upon the fact that Members of the Opposition had suddenly become very keen about this question of local taxation, but if the right hon. Gentleman or any other member of the Government would take the trouble to inquire into the matter he would find that this was not a party matter, but that there was a very large movement in the country, and great interest taken in this question; that the agricultural classes and other ratepayers were determined to bring their grievances into public notice, and they would not rest satisfied until those grievances were redressed. The right hon. Gentleman further said that two things had been done in the last two years which would benefit local authorities and reduce the burden of local taxation. With regard to one of them, namely, the arrangement made last year with respect to licences, no one in the rural districts considered that any benefit was being conferred upon their localities by that arrangement. The arrangement was made in order that the Chancellor of the Exchequer might benefit by any increase of the duties, and the increased amount of duty paid must on the whole tend to a certain extent to decrease the number of licences taken out. The local rates would, therefore, lose rather than gain by the arrangement. The burden of local rates had not been relieved in this way, but, although they had not been increased up to the present, there was a tendency that they might be increased in future. The Postmaster-General was not, therefore, entitled to claim that as a relief to local taxation. It was no doubt originally intended that the incidence of local taxation should fall according to ability to pay. It was equally certain that it did not now so fall, and necessarily there was bound to be a certain amount of inequality and injustice, so long as personal property was exempted from rating. He was not suggesting so large a change as that personal property should come under the rates to-day; but the result of this inequality was that some trades and professions had been rated at a very much higher rate than others, and that the occupiers of agricultural land had been rated at a much higher rate than any other trade or profession in the country. They were paying rates not only on their premises, but on their stock in trade, on their raw material, on everything they had. If anyone took the trouble to go into the figures, he would find that out of every £100 of gross income the farmer was paying an enormous amount more for rates than any other class of the community. This injustice was recognised some twelve years ago, with the result that the Agricultural Rates Act was passed. A recommendation had been made by a Royal Commission that agricultural land should be rated at only one-fourth of the rateable value, but the Act did not go so far as that. It exempted agricultural land from half the rates, and the agricultural rates grant was then made to compensate local rating areas for their loss of income owing to the Act. At that time the average rate in the rural districts was 2s. 2d. To the best of his recollection that average was arrived at by taking the rateable value of all agricultural property, and dividing that by the total amount spent in the agricultural area. The grant was accordingly fixed at 1s. 1d. In the year 1896–7, the amount of the agricultural rates grant paid to the local spending authorities was £1,330,031. From the discussion at the time, it was clearly the expectation of the Government that 2s. 2d. would remain more or less the average rate for a long time, and that the agricultural rates grant would continue to make up the loss incurred by the local spending authorities. What had really happened in the last eleven years was that the rateable value of agricultural land had doubled, being now more than 4s. in the £, while the agricultural rates grant was less than it was in the first year owing to a decrease in the rateable value, so that there was a deficiency of £1,500,000 a year. That had added enormously to the burdens of the rural districts. How was it that rates had risen to 4s. in the £? It was very largely because the local rates were used to such a tremendous extent for national services. He would confine his observations to the five services which the recent Royal Commission on Local Taxation expressly declared to be national, viz., the police, the cost of which was paid up to 61 per cent. out of local rates; lunatics and asylums, paid out of local rates to the extent of 75 per cent.; education, to the extent of 48 per cent; roads and bridges, 86 per cent.; Poor Law relief, 91 per cent. He had taken the figures for 1904–5 which were in the latest Blue-book on the subject, and in round figures the local rates paid £40,000,000 towards the £56,000,000 which was expended altogether on these five national services. Was there any justification for this large preponderance of cost falling on the localities rather than on the whole community? He did not think there was. The police were now largely under Imperial control; at all events they had to be kept up to the standard laid down by the Imperial Parliament, and to that extent they were not under local control. Lunatics and asylums, he thought, on every ground were a national matter. Education, again, was a national matter. The Imperial Parliament laid down the conditions of education, and there was very little beyond local administration left in local hands. Another point was that in the rural schools the children were given an education which fitted them in the large majority of cases, not for the rural community, but for the towns, with the result that a very large proportion of the children, after they had received their education paid for by the agricultural community, eventually left their districts for the towns, and were lost to the areas which had educated them. Therefore, he contended, education should be on a national basis as far as expenditure was concerned, or, at all events, great relief should be given to the local rates. Then as to the roads and bridges. Time was when they were very largely a local affair. But now they were very largely a national affair, and they were becoming of an increasingly national nature, because the most serious user of the roads was by very fast travelling vehicles and heavy motors, coming, it might be, from hundreds of miles away, and which, therefore, did not contribute in any sense whatever to the upkeep of the roads which they destroyed. He did not intend to ask the Government to do anything definitely to-day with reference to roads and bridges, for it was generally expected that before very long increased taxation of motor cars would be proposed, and that would be the most fitting time to propose an increased contribution towards the roads. He did not think the roads could be taken entirely away from the local rates, because there was bound to be a certain amount of local control, and wherever there was local control there ought to be a local burden.

Attention called to the fact that forty Members were not present. House counted; and, forty Members being found present—

*MR. COURTHOPE, continuing his observations, said he had enumerated the five services which cast so heavy a burden upon the local rates. There was a tendency, particularly noticeable in the last two years of legislative proposals, largely to increase the burden on the local rates for national purposes. There was certainly a generally accepted belief in the rural districts that if the present Education Bill was passed in its present form it would throw an increased burden on the local rates. The Small Holdings Act had thrown an extra burden upon them, and the Housing Bill would certainly impose a very heavy burden. Then there were such Bills as those for the feeding and medical inspection of school children, and others of that nature, which tended to increase the burdens on the local ratepayers, though the services were essentially national. He thought the time had come when the local ratepayers could no longer stand this increased burden. The subject which he thought constituted the strongest case of all, and with regard to which the Government might reasonably be asked to do something at once, was that of lunatics and asylums. There was no doubt whatever that, if the Government took over the whole of the administration as well as the cost of the pauper lunatics and asylums, the gain to the community would be very great. It was in 1846, he thought, that the Government took over the prisons, the conveyance of prisoners, and so forth, and the result had been a great saving to the community at large. Of course, slightly more had to be found in the shape of taxes, but the relief of rates was much greater than the increase of taxes. The reason was obvious in the case of prisons. In the old days every prison had to provide accommodation for every class of prisoner. Now the management was much more economical because certain prisons were arranged for certain classes of prisoners, So it would be in the case of asylums and pauper lunatics. At present each county had to provide for every type of lunatic—and there were a great many types which required different treatment and even a great variety of premises, and there was not the slightest doubt that a very large saving might be made, probably as much as a third of the total cost, if the whole administration of pauper lunatics and asylums was taken over by the central authority. He urged the Government to give this matter their real consideration, because it would undoubtedly be a great relief to the local spending authorities and the ratepayer, and at the same time a real economy for the community at large. One objection usually raised was that this could not be done without a Valuation Bill. He could not, however, see what a Valuation Bill had to do with the control of lunatics. The central authority could take over the whole affair. The local authority did not want to keep the control of the asylums. He did not know of a single case where a county would mind parting with the control and losing the burden of their lunatics. Where a Valuation Bill came in passed his comprehension. Even if the Government felt they could not entirely take over the administration, a certain amount of that could be done locally, and it would be very easy to make a contribution per head of the lunatics. That did not require a Valuation Bill. He really thought that that argument was a very poor reason for shelving the difficulty and causing delay. In the Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation it was stated that roughly there were 100,000 pauper lunatics in county and borough asylums, and the numbers were increasing annually, and they recommended that efficient management should be carried out by a central authority at an additional cost of £1,500,000 to the Exchequer, while the saving to the rates would be nearly £2,500,000 for exactly the same service, which at the same time would probably be managed more efficiently centrally than locally. He considered the matter to be of the greatest possible importance. It was to the supreme interest of the country at large that injustice of this kind should not continue, and that the life of those who lived and were taxed locally in the rural districts should be made as easy as possible. The increase of rates had been a very large item in the causes which had driven the yeoman farmer off the land, and anything that reduced this burden, and helped to get a useful class of the community back where they ought to be, would be a decided step in the right direction. He urged this sincerely and not captiously in any way, and he hoped the Government would be able to hold out some promise of help in the future.

MR. MUNRO FERGUSON (Leith Burghs) said he found himself in general agreement with the main lines of the Finance Bill, and in absolute disagreement with the object of the Amendment. He did not think those who piled up Debt to so extraordinary a degree in bygone years were in a very strong position in attacking the finance of an Administration which had paid off Debt at such an unparalleled rate, and at the same time afforded considerable relief in ordinary taxation. He agreed that some sources of taxation were already heavily burdened, but others were not, and though the provisions of this Finance Bill must increase the burden of taxation before very long, there were sources of taxation on the existing basis from which a considerable amount of additional revenue might be raised. He was aware of the risk of driving capital out of the country, but it was obvious that the contribution of many of the largest incomes was not equivalent to that of many of the more moderate incomes, and, therefore, from the largest incomes a considerable amount of revenue might yet be fairly raised upon the principle of taxation according to ability to pay. Again, the services conducted by local authorities, many of which were mainly national, and very largely onerous in their character, entailed an undue burden upon realty, and personalty gave an insufficient contribution. He did not believe it was impossible to make personalty contribute fairly to local taxation, and a great deal was shown by the minority Report on the incidence of local taxation—that of Lord Balfour of Burleigh and the Secretaries to the Treasury—as to how that burden ought to be lightened. At one time in his own country there were counties in which rates were levied on income, whether it was personalty or realty, and he had never been satisfied that, although that system dropped out, in some respects it might not have been maintained. Again the cost of the administration of the liquor traffic entailed a considerable additional burden upon local administration, and the monopoly value, the profits of the retail trade conferred by the monopoly, had been allowed hitherto to go into private hands. Ultimately a very large revenue might be derived from that source, while there were other forms of wealth, which might be more immediately rated, although at first they might not make so large a return as was sometimes supposed. Land values and mining royalties had been referred to, and there was certainly fair ground for consideration whether wealth in that and in some other forms made its fair contribution to public burdens. He did not think it did; and from these sources they should look for some addition to the revenue, although he expected in the matter of land values the local authorities, and not the Treasury, would be most likely to get anything that came out of it. For some works he believed they would have to use loans, and loans could not be altogether barred in making provision for some of the public requirements. Yet, however, sanguine they might be as to increased returns from these and other sources, and the increased returns on existing taxation which would accrue from increased national wealth under a free trade system, and our national wealth was, happily, rapidly increasing, we had to reckon in the immediate future with a vast increase in public expenditure. The doubt that crossed one's mind was whether these liabilities had been sufficiently discounted in the present Budget. They were grouped under several heads—old-age pensions, defence, the relief of local taxation or contributions by the State to local taxation, public works, and social legislation. As regarded old-age pensions they found themselves confronted with the very moderate figure of some £6,000,000. It had been estimated to go as high as £7,000,000, but it seemed likely to involve them ultimately in perhaps three or four times that sum. No Government could resist reasonable pressure to reduce the age-limit. Really a seventy years old-age pension was almost a mockery of an old-age pension scheme. Many of them, even in that House, were pretty well worn out before they got to the age of seventy, and he thought sixty-five would not be an excessive limit. For many of the working classes sixty would not be an excessive age at which to provide against old age. The question was how to get the best results from this expenditure. What was incumbent upon them was to consider whether this scheme had been introduced with due safeguards against imposition, waste, and thriftlessness. He would support a lower age-limit, and he hoped the Government would devise a more stringent qualification. As the scheme developed he trusted they would be able to engraft upon it some form of contribution, and that it would be accompanied also by Poor Law reforms and by a stipulation that the drunkard and other classes of that description would be eliminated. Under those circumstances only would the old-age pensions scheme be a sound financial investment. What they had to fear was that by tinkering, patching, and muddling through, although they might escape disaster in the field, they might yet incur disaster in their domestic administration. Many of them had been alarmed by the recent utterance of the Chancellor of the Exchequer which implied that they might be able to reduce their armaments, but the uneasiness created by that disquieting impression had been soothed by the recollection of the firm promises and declarations made by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary with so much emphasis. It was clear that a largely increased expenditure would have to be incurred immediately to secure naval pre-eminence. Unless the Territorial Army scheme failed there would be less economy in the Army, because the Territorial Associations would need more money. Their main requirements at the present time was the transference of the main naval base to the North Sea, which involved the completion of the works at Rosyth. He could not imagine any greater misfortune than that this country should be forced into war without a naval base in the North Sea ready, more especially in view of the activity now being displayed in deepening the harbours and channels on the opposite coast of the North Sea. He did not altogether approve of the policy of the total abstention from loans in the carrying out of works in which the national security was involved, and by means of a loan the millions required for Rosyth could be raised at once. He agreed that it was well to do without loans where it was possible, but in view of the enormous liabilities which the next Budget must disclose, the question was whether they could face the cost of these vast works out of revenue within the time in which the works should be completed in order to render the country secure. Then there was the cost of the social programme. The expenditure upon education and physical fitness was a good investment, and the Government could not cry "Halt" in those outlays which were involving a great burden upon the ratepayers, and were becoming a growing liability upon the State. The questions of the incidence of local taxation and grants-in-aid from the Treasury were becoming pressing. New departures were being inaugurated in the form of national undertakings, the burden of which would come upon the Exchequer. The means of communication were to come under public control, and Irish land settlement would have to follow upon Irish land purchase. Then there were undertakings such as afforestation, He was inclined to think that hardly enough revenue was being raised for all these undertakings. Committee after committee had urged the liability for afforestation upon the State, and the Government would ultimately be obliged to act in this and other matters which would entail a considerable burden upon their resources. He was making those objections in no pessimistic spirit. So long as they aimed at strengthening individual character and resource, so long as we had security for peace with our neighbours, and the prosperity for ourselves which free trade afforded, we were in the strongest position of any nation in the world to meet our national responsibilities and requirements. It was in regard to defence that he had some concern. This country would never again go lightly into war, and still less would we take the initiative in making war. Nevertheless, the nation would be sure to make short work of any Ministry which was unprepared for war, because any national misfortune would be crushing and irreparable. A naval scare would be the most costly and dangerous of all possible contingencies, and he urged the Government to face boldly the inevitable and not unduly delay a prudent provision for the immediate future in matters of defence, more especially as regarded the naval base in the North Sea. The greatest service the Government could render to the State was to make it comprehend the true financial situation, so as never to allow the country to imagine for a moment that the conditions in regard to safety were more favourable than the acutal facts warranted.

Mr. BEALE (Ayrshire, S.) said he would be glad to see the basis of taxation broadened in a true sense, but before he could support that proposition in the sense of the meaning which had been attached to that phrase throughout the country he would like to be satisfied that it was not going to benefit particular trades, because protection to his mind would bring about a disastrous condition of trusts and coalitions in the commercial world. If the basis of taxation was to be broadened in order really to benefit those who were brought into the scope of the taxation by the broadening, then it was quite another thing. If they eliminated all those ideas of restoring prosperity to certain trades which were not making as much profit as the capitalists desired, if they left off mixing up this phrase, which had been interpreted in the country as meaning a promise of protective duties to manufacturers, if they would eliminate all the absurd notions of making the foreigners pay our taxes, and the idea that they could increase the total volume of trade of this country by a process of protective duties, then he was quite willing to consider the subject. He was not in favour of a contributory scheme of old-age pensions, because that had been explained as meaning a scheme of insurance as an absolute condition for getting a pension. He agreed very much with the previous speaker's description of the present scheme as paltry and unsatisfactory. It might, however, eventually grow into one of a larger and more comprehensive character, and he welcomed it for the benefit it would confer in substituting a pension scheme for the present method of maintaining the aged poor. He hoped that eventually an attempt would be made to bring about a broad national scheme of old-age pensions. They knew what was meant by hon. Gentlemen opposite, and by many people throughout the country, when they spoke of the broadening of the basis of taxation; they meant duties on the articles consumed by the community. He would not rule out such duties if they were imposed for the purpose of providing old-age pensions, if the money could not be obtained otherwise, but he did not wish to express approval of the retention of such a duty as the sugar duty. He did not approve of any taxation the burden of which was relative to the number of little mouths which the taxpayer had to feed. He was glad to hear from the hon. Member for South Hackney that there were many methods of taxation which could be tried before they had recourse to an expedient of that kind. Some people were in the habit of discussing the question of old-age pensions as if only the very poor who could not bear more taxation were to get the benefit of them. Under a large and comprehensive national scheme an enormous number of people belonging not only to the lower, but the middle classes and even the well-to-do would benefit. He did not agree with the previous speaker that as time went on there should be more definitions, restrictions, and conditions. If a poor person received 5s. a week he would be able to live with his friends, and it would be far more economical for the State to pay that sum than to spend 14s. a week in keeping that person in a workhouse. He was ready to face any broadening of the basis of taxation which might be found necessary in order to raise money, provided it did not indirectly involve protection.

*VISCOUNT HELMSLEY (Yorkshire, N.R., Thirsk) said he did not intend to go into the whole question of the Budget, nor to follow his hon. friend into a theoretical discussion as to the true meaning of broadening the basis of taxation. It seemed to him that one could push theory on the question of taxation a good deal too far. While one might hold that taxation was mainly—as of course it was—for the purpose of providing revenue, yet he failed to see why they should not use taxation where they could in order to get some indirect benefit out of it. If taxation were so adjusted that they could get some benefit from it it would be better than a system which was merely disagreeable to the person on whom it fell. Those countries which adopted a system of taxation which they considered suited their needs had something which we had not. No one could say that in Germany there was not far less inclination to kick at the amount of taxation imposed than there was in this country. The Germans would probably be more willing to spend a large part of their revenue upon their Navy than even we should on our Navy, although the Navy was of more paramount importance to us than it was to the Germans. He was profoundly disappointed with the Budget because it did not deal in any way with local taxation. Last year the Prime Minister led the House to expect that he would in the near future do something more definite to put local taxation on a sound footing. He was afraid as Governments went on, each Government put off dealing with this important and crucial subject. This Parliament was now in its third year, but this subject seemed very likely to meet with the same fate as others and not be dealt with at all. The Postmaster-General had said that the late Government did nothing in his direction. That fact did not really affect the argument, because the late Government during the whole time they were in office dealt with War Budgets. It was in this Budget, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer had a boom year and a large surplus, that they expected something would be done to put the question of local taxation on an equitable footing. As representing an agricultural constituency he urged the Government to recognise this as a reform which should be carried out as soon as possible. The burden of rates was increasing year by year, and no one could say that the increase was entirely due to the local authority. It was due to duties imposed by Acts of Parliament. No doubt some of the local authorities might be extravagant, but that accusation could not be levelled against all of them. A large part of the increase was due to education, added to which now was the medical inspection of children, and various requirements, owing to improved standard of living made by the central authorities such as their requirements with regard to lunatic asylums and the regulation of the police and so on. The rates in 1879–80 were 15s. 6d. per head of population, but in 1904–5 they had increased to 28s. per head in spite of the fact that the rateable value had increased by about 40 per cent. It had increased from

£116,000,000 to £163,000,000 and, therefore they might have expected that taxation would have gone down in consequence. During the whole of that time the Exchequer contributions had not increased in the same degree as the burden on the ratepayers. The Exchequer contributions had only increased by £2,197,000, and consequently a large proportion of the additional burdens thrown upon the local authorities had fallen entirely upon the ratepayers. There were several grievances which the ratepayers had to endure as against those endured by taxpayers. The ratepayers contributed 82 per cent. of local taxation while the owners of other forms of property contributed in a very trivial degree. Then there was a grievance which the agricultural ratepayers had as against the urban ratepayers, but he did not propose to deal with that particular grievance on this occasion. When he said that the ratepayers contributed 82 per cent. of the expenditure required in local districts by the local authorities, it had to be recognised that it was not entirely for local purposes, but that a considerable proportion of it was for services which in reality were more national than local. Why should one form of property contribute almost entirely to this taxation for the expenditure of the local authorities? They all knew that that state of affairs had arisen purely by a series of accidents. It was intended originally that all the money required for local purposes should be raised according to the means of the people of the locality paying for Imperial taxes. Gradually personalty escaped local taxation; local taxation was raised alone from rateable property, and there it remained. The position was at present burdensome, but it was becoming more burdensome owing to the increasing requirements of the central authorities. Those services to which the ratepayers were obliged to contribute were not always local in character. They had been over and over again described as national services. The Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation stated that education, main roads, police, lunatic asylums, and Poor Law were services which should be regarded as national. That was a wise recommendation which nobody could dispute. No better definition of what the local authorities should be required to contribute to had ever been made than that given by the late Sir Massey Lopes in this House. He said that the Exchequer ought to relieve the ratepayers of expenditure which was not dependent upon local control. As regarded education, one might say that it depended on local control but it was at a standard fixed by the central authority. In regard to poor relief, it might be said that local control was reduced to a minimum, and the same was especially true with regard to the police service and lunatic asylums. That being the case, it seemed to him absurd that a large proportion of these services should be paid for out of this local taxation which was raised so unjustly, and not from the national funds. The Postmaster-General had admitted that there was a grievance with regard to local taxation, but said that it could not be removed without a Valuation Bill. They had heard talk of a Valuation Bill for a long time, but it had never come off. It did not seem to him necessary to have a Valuation Bill in order to remedy these particular grievances. National services at present paid for by local authorities could be put on the Imperial Exchequer without a Valuation Bill at all. To remedy the grievance of the agricultural ratepayers as against the urban ratepayers a Valuation Bill might be necessary, but for the other grievances a Valuation Bill was not necessary at all. Lord St. Aldwyn, whose authority on finance hon. Gentlemen opposite would be ready to admit, criticising some proposal that had been made in the agricultural interest for the benefit of local taxation, went so far as to say that in his opinion a good many of those services should be borne entirely by the national Exchequer, such as lunatic asylums, workhouses, and the police. That was the minimum for which he would ask; and that was the ground on which they could make a beginning in the way of relief of local taxation. It had already been done with regard to prisons, and there was no reason why it should not be done now in regard to lunatic asylums, Poor Law relief, police, and main roads. Main roads were every day becoming more and more national and less local. In old days they were the main arteries of communication, and then they were paid for by the people who used them by toll bars, which he thought was an admirable method. But when the roads became of more use to the parishioners than to anybody else, the upkeep of them was charged to the parish or local authority. Now they were going back to the old system and the main roads were becoming again the main means of communication, and it seemed to him reasonable that they should be paid for out of the national Exchequer and that all that the local authorities should be called upon to do was to pay for the district roads. He had mentioned the general lines on which local taxation reform might proceed immediately without any special effort on the part of the Government. It did not require any heroic measure of valuation or anything else to carry the reforms recommended by the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, which were long overdue. These services should be put on the national Exchequer. There was in regard to this matter throughout the country a great feeling which the House hardly recognised. It was the only thing which stood in the way of all progress in carrying out the wishes of that House in regard to local legislation. The fear of increasing the rates stood in the way of the advance of secondary education and other reforms, and until something was done to relieve the ratepayers of the unjust burden which fell upon them he was afraid that the local authorities in the rural districts would be very chary of spending money on necessary services. He entreated the Chancellor of the Exchequer in next year's Budget—it was too late for this year's—to make a beginning by putting some of those services on the Imperial Exchequer, and so relieving the local authorities of the amount they cost at present.

*MR. CHIOZZA MONEY (Paddington, N.) said that there was very general agreement with part of the observations which fell from the noble Lord. Undoubtedly the time was long overdue for a readjustment of the financial relations between the Imperial and local authorities. But the noble Lord would forgive him if he dealt with the even more important considerations raised by the Amendment before the House. A good deal had been said in the debate about broadening or widening the basis of taxation. He could not help expressing surprise that no one had defined what was meant by the "basis of taxation." What was the basis of taxation in this or any other country? It was the sum of the productions of the labour—mental and manual—exercised by the people of the country. That and that alone was the basis of taxation. In other words, the national dividend was the basis of taxation. They could make it no wider or bigger by taxation, but he asserted that if they were not very careful in their methods of taxation they might very easily make it narrower. That was the first point. He would like to advance this proposition: that they could not by means of import duties increase the national dividend—increase the product of the country. There was one observation which fell from the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the late Government—he almost regarded it as a gleam of humour—to the effect (interpreting or misinterpreting something that fell from the Postmaster-General) that we could levy a market toll, and so bring in as taxpayers other people outside these realms, including presumably British Colonists, and make them contribute to the revenue of this country. He could hardly think that suggestion serious. If it was really believed that the foreigner could be persuaded to pay a portion of our taxes, why was such nice discrimination made between different articles? Why were raw materials always excluded? Why not levy a market toll on raw materials and give us old-age pensions at thirty-five years of age? Hon. Gentlemen opposite must make up their minds as to which leg they would stand upon, whether they wanted tariff reform for the purpose of revenue or for the purpose of protection. If they wanted it for the purposes of revenue, to lower the income-tax by broadening the basis of taxation, if they wished to put a greater burden on the poor and less upon the rich, where did the protective effect come in? If, on the other hand, the intention was to decrease the imports of this country let them give up the revenue tax. They could not ride both horses. He passed to more general considerations. The general charge made against the Budget was that it increased expenditure at the same time that it decreased revenue. He would have been inclined to sympathise with that charge if this were not a free trade country admitted to have passed through a considerable period of prosperity, compared even with other periods which were nothing less than prosperous. This country had within its borders an amount of accumulated wealth and national income which compared more than favourably with any other country in the world. It had been stated that our war reserve had been greatly trenched upon. That was a gross exaggeration. The war reserve was the taxable capacity of the country, which was not gravely altered by a degree of taxation such as we had at present. Our expenditure had been stated as £154,000,000. If they brought under consideration things which were left out in the ordinary financial statement the amount was said to be as much as £160,000,000. But taking it at £154,000,000 could such a statement be justified? If they deducted £18,000,000 or £19,000,000 relating to Post Office business, which should not appear as national expenditure at all, the amount was reduced to £136,000,000. Of that £136,000,000 the National Debt Service absorbed £28,000,000, reducing the expenditure for 44,000,000 people to £108,000,000. Of that £108,000,000, there were absorbed for the purposes of defence, £60,000,000, leaving about £40,000,000 for Imperial expenditure on the Civil Service. Could that be said to be too great an expenditure when compared with the national income, which now amounted to something like £1,800,000,000? When that comparison was made, as it ought to be made, it was an exaggeration to say that we had greatly trenched on our resources by our expenditure. It was not enough to go back five, ten, or fifteen years and hold up our hands in horror because our expenditure had increased by £5,000,000, £10,000,000 or £20,000,000. When it was possible for German visitors to come to this country, as they did recently, and express their pity for the condition of children in a school in Clerkenwell, did it not make hon. Members think, not whether we were spending too much, but whether we were spending enough? If such considerations were taken into account, it would be realised that it was not possible to reduce the national expenditure.

Sir F. BANBURY (City of London): It is a pity you did not say that two and a half years ago.

*Mr. CHIOZZA MONEY said he was not responsible for anything he had not said. What he did say to his electors was not that we were spending too much but that we were raising money in the wrong way and spending it on the wrong things. Looking at the Budget as a whole, it seemed to him to show a want of confidence in the wealth of the country. When he considered the old-age pension scheme with its limitations as to age, as to pauperism, and as to penalising married couples, he asked himself did the Prime Minister, in framing his scheme, want to make these limitations—did he desire to do these ungrateful and ungracious things? No. The origin of them appeared to be a want of confidence in the taxable capacity of the country. Having said that, he would like to add that whatever the limitations, it would remain to the credit of the Government and of the Prime Minister that they had made old-age pensions an actual reality. He did not believe that the proper means of redistributing the income of the country was by taxation. The proper means was to change the distribution of the product of labour at the source. As to taxation, the present distribution of income came in in this way. When it had been decided how much it was wise to spend, then it was for the Government to look at incomes as they existed, and to adjust their taxation accordingly. But he should denounce any idea that it was possible greatly to ameliorate social conditions by means of taxation. Having said that, however, he was entitled to call attention to one or two striking facts with regard to the present social conditions. In this country about 700,000 persons died every year. Only 82,000 left property worth the attention of Somerset House, and they left £300,000,000, and of that amount £200,000,000 were left by only 4,000 people. That was no extraordinary case in 1907—it was only the ordinary case. It happened every year with even greater precision than the seasons. What was the fact with regard to the distribution of income? Various estimates had been made, and one could only advance what were the general probabilities of the case; but he thought, within a margin of error which did not matter, the following facts might be taken as giving a correct view and a proper sense of proportion. They had an annual income of about £1,800,000,000. About £600,000,000 to £650,000,000 of that was taken by 1,250,000 people, about one-thirtieth of the whole; another 3,750,000 took about £250,000,000 or £300,000,000; and the balance, about one-half, was taken by nearly the whole mass of the population of people below the income-tax line. It seemed to him high time that a Chancellor of the Exchequer made a Budget having regard to these extraordinary facts. How could taxes be fitted to the shoulders of the people, how could they be so levied as to do justice all round, if these facts were not taken into consideration? He earnestly hoped the time would soon come when a Chancellor of the Exchequer would have at his disposal, as he ought to have, a Census bureau, thoroughly equipped and able to supply all these facts and information impartially to the House, so that they could base their taxes and proposals upon them. In 1897 the income brought under the review of the Inland Revenue Commissioners was £700,000,000; the late Chancellor of the Exchequer told them in his remarkable Budget speech that in the last financial year, ending this March, £980,000,000 was brought under their review. That was an increase of nearly £300,000,000 in eleven years. And it was of interest and importance to note how the increased gross figure of £980,000,000 for 1907–8 was arrived at. The Prime Minister told them that the remarkable increase last year arose from the differentiation introduced in the income-tax, and by the fact that if persons with incomes under £2,000 wanted the rebate off the nominal rate they had to make a declaration. By that process over £30,000,000 more income was reviewed last year than the year before. The Prime Minister called that a great moral and financial reform. So it was, but it was something else. Could it be called entirely a moral reform when it was brought about, after all, by what was a very large fine? If a man with £1,500 a year did not make a declaration, he would have to pay £75 income-tax; if he did, he would get off with £56 5s., a saving of £18 15s. That was not exactly a moral consideration; it was a fine. He thought also that the statement of the Prime Minister was a further argument in favour of a graduated income-tax and universal declarations. If declarations on incomes up to £2,000 had brought to light £35,000,000 more income, how much more income would be brought to light if they demanded declarations from the remaining taxpayers—those who enjoyed the lion's share of the national income? At the present time so great was their dislike to inquisitorial methods, so impressed were they with the belief that the English people were not of a kind who would submit to inquisition, that they went to their employers and asked: "How much do you pay to John Smith?" The employer wrote down that John Smith got a modest £300 per year. Then the Inland Revenue Commissioners sent Smith an assessment form. That, forsooth, was not inquisitorial; it was the method which suited the freedom-loving Briton. Of course, it was much more inquisitorial than anything done in any other country. They had inquisitorial methods with regard to the poorer taxpayers, but, with regard to the rich taxpayers, they never asked them to make declarations except in the case of a man whose business was his only source of income. They only got a declaration of total income from people up to £2,000 who earned their incomes. He noticed that an hon. friend dissented, but he assured him the fact was as he had stated. He himself last year moved an Amendment to compel rich taxpayers to declare their incomes, and the Government would not accept it. If they had that declaration from all taxpayers, they would know the nature of the basis of taxation, which, as he had said, was the national income. But how was that income divided amongst the people? At present we only had the estimates of unofficial industrious persons like himself. People who opposed a graduated income-tax denied those unofficial estimates, but they would not give them an official estimate. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to inform himself with regard to the distribution of the income of the nation. What reasons were there against the proposal? Some people said it was not worth while, because there was not much income at the top of the scale. Whatever doubts there might be, however, there was no doubt whatever that a tremendous amount of income in this country lay over £2,000 or £3,000 a year, and even £5,000 and £10,000 a year. Corroboration of that could be got by inference from the death duties figures. One had only to look at the graduated list of estates brought to light by the graduated death duties to see how wise Sir William Harcourt was not to stop his graduation at a low point. Did he say: "Here are only a few rich people in this country; shall I irritate them by graduated death duties? Shall I cause them to fly to foreign countries?" He wisely brushed aside those considerations. He attached proper weight to them, and graduated the death duties up to £1,000,000, The Prime Minister, agreeing with him, and not being content with even the Harcourt scale, carried the graduation further and graduated even millionaires by means of a sort of super-tax. If that was a right process to apply to death duties, surely it was proper to apply it to the income-tax. If they graduated death duties up to 8 per cent. and then beyond 8 per cent. by a super-tax to 11 or 12 per cent., he argued that they should treat incomes in precisely the same way in effect if not in method. What would be the effect upon the average taxpayer of the receipt of a paper demanding to know his income, if they had a proper graduated scale which had regard to his position in society and the amount of his income? Let them suppose a man with £500 a year received such a paper. He would see he was taxed at 4d. or 5d., that the man with £2,000 was taxed at say 11d. or 1s. and the man with £5,000 at say 1s. 3d. The man with £500, under those conditions, might grumble a little bit, but he would feel a pure joy that other people were paying more. Could it be said that those above him would be very bitterly discontented if they were asked to pay their just contribution? He did not personally think the number of grumblers would be very great. There were threatenings in advance, but there were threatenings in the case of the death duties, and they knew now exactly how much importance to attach to them. He did not believe in the term super-tax; it was not the right expression to apply. He did not think there should be any suggestion that the rich should be taxed more because they were rich. He would have a plain graduated scale, which would be so arranged as to do justice between one man and another. That was how it was done in Prussia, and he did not see why it should not be done here. The term "super-tax" would not then be necessary, and there would be no suggestion that the rich man was being taxed because he was rich. The suggestion was entirely unnecessary. There was only one more point he desired to deal with. A good deal had been said about direct and indirect taxation. Somebody had said all taxes were bad. He remembered that Mr. Gladstone did not express that opinion about direct and indirect taxation. In a very famous Budget speech, Mr. Gladstone led forth two blushing damsels, one a blonde and the other a brunette, one direct and the other indirect taxation. He begged to submit, however, that there was really another lady in the case. He referred to revenue-producing State businesses. This country was at considerable disadvantage by being dependent almost entirely upon direct and indirect taxation. It was not the case with Prussia. The Prussian railways in 1905 made a net profit of £33,500,000. He would suggest to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that that example furnished another means of meeting the growing expenditure of the country. The country would be severely handicapped if it did not set itself to control the revenue-producing monopolies of the country. The hon. Member for Dulwich the other day directed attention to the fact that German taxation per head was lower than in England; but they had the Prussian railways paying not only the interest on the railway debt, but the whole of the interest on the National Debt of Prussia, and furnishing in addition

£9,000,000 or £10,000,000 in relief of ordinary taxation every year. This country, therefore, was very greatly handicapped as compared with Prussia in raising its revenue. In addition, of course, they possessed their State forests, about 20 per cent. of the mines of Prussia, and the Prussian Government had their hands reaching out to the control of the whole of the mining interests of Prussia. He believed that not only the railways of the country, but also the coal, which in the twentieth century was the very life of industry, should be in the possession of the State. If we did not set our hands to the policy of national organisation, which would not only benefit the trade of the country directly, but would also furnish increasing revenue to the State from time to time, we should feel an increasing handicap in competition with other countries.

*MR. J. F. MASON (Windsor) said the hon. Member who had just sat down made one remark with which he heartily agreed, viz., that we were raising money in the wrong way and spending it in the wrong way. His reason for agreeing with that remark would become apparent later, but he desired first to refer to the part of the Amendment dealing with the proporton of local to Imperial taxation. In looking at this matter they ought, of course, to bear in mind that in the existing system of taxation local and Imperial taxation was borne by the same people, although in varying proportions, and in endeavouring to reduce in any way the respective burdens of those different classes of taxation, it would appear desirable to examine each class with a view of noting not only its yield and its incidence, but also the collateral effect either for good or evil which was exercised by that class of taxes. Local taxation was raised on land and buildings in proportion to their value, so that any man who was able either to improve his land or erect extra good buildings was always faced by the discouragement of having to pay higher rates. This had had a bad effect on all schemes for housing and improvements, and to that extent was evil in its collateral effects. Coming to Imperial taxation, when the State took a part of income which would otherwise be spent by the individual it did no harm to the community except in so far as it reduced the spending capacity of the community and reduced the reserve taxable capacity of the nation. But when the State took income which would otherwise be capitalised, it did something more, because it restricted the capitalisation which was necessary to make good the waste of capital which was taking place in other directions. To that extent the income-tax had a bad effect. But the death duties appeared to him to be wholly bad, because they took existing capital, which had already been produced and built up, not for the purpose of keeping it as capital, but for the purposes of the current expenditure of the State. Unless that was counteracted by some means of replacing that destroyed capital, it was quite evident that to that extent they reduced the capital of the country on which the whole prosperity of the nation depended. He thought nobody would offer any argument in favour of the destruction of capital. He could quite understand that reasonable arguments might be put forward in favour of transferring capital from the individual to the State. He did not agree. He believed the argument could be demolished, but he understood that it could be put forward logically. But he thought no logical argument could be put forward for the ruthless destruction of capital which already existed. In doing that they were not only reducing the amount of capital necessary for the nation, but they were also killing the goose that laid the income-tax egg. Five-sixths of indirect taxation was raised on alcohol and tobacco and the remaining sixth, amounting to 4s. 7d. per head of the population, was raised entirely on articles of general consumption, food and tea, articles which we could not produce in this country, and on which there was no question whatever that the consumer paid the whole of the tax. The evil of this form of taxation was that this was throwing the burden on the cost of living, a burden of 4s. 7d. a head, which was equivalent to about half the total import duties of Germany, including their manufactured goods. It seemed to him that all those existing forms of taxation certainly had their disadvantages, and none of them appeared to have any corresponding advantages sufficient to justify a transfer on any large scale from one class to the other. But had we got to the end of our tether? Not if we removed a portion of the burden from our own shoulders to those of the foreigner. That remark always caused considerable hilarity among Gentlemen opposite, but if the idea was so supremely ridiculous why was it that we should object to the tariffs imposed by other nations when we wanted to send our goods into those countries? Was it not evident to every manufacturer in this country that the tariffs of other nations did stand in our way because we had to pay a portion of them? If the consumer paid the whole of the tax what would it matter to us whether they had tariff walls or not? The gospel of the free trader was that the consumer paid the whole of the tax on the necessaries of life and of industry unless they could substantially make good the supply from domestic sources. That was the gospel as laid down by the Prime Minister. Given a preferential system under which foreign imports came into this country and were taxed, and Colonial imports came in free, thus widening the word "domestic" in the sense used by the Prime Minister into the word "Imperial," he should like to ask whether there were any articles and if so whether there were many which could not be substantially made good from within the British Empire. The consumer did not pay the whole of the tax even when they could not substantially make good the whole of the requirements of the nation. They were all agreed that the whole of the tobacco duty, for instance, fell upon the consumer. They were all equally agreed that if there were an import duty on coal, the quantity of coal coming into this country being very small, the duty would have no effect whatever on the price. That small quantity of coal, if there were an import duty of 2s. a ton would probably continue to come in, but it would be sold at the price of our domestic supply, and the duty would be paid by the foreigner who would either send it in and pay the duty or keep his coal, but if the duty were small, it would not be sufficient to stop him sending it in. But if it was granted that a tax on a very small quantity would not alter the price and would therefore be paid by the foreigner, might he assume that the foreigner would pay the tax if, say, 1 per cent. of our total requirements of coal were imported? He thought probably a good many hon. Gentlemen opposite would grant that with 1 per cent. of our total requirements imported, the price would not be affected, and that 1 per cent. would pay the small duty imposed upon it. According to the definition laid down by the Prime Minister there was a particular point—a small quantity of any given article which could be imported into this country without affecting the price, and the duty on which therefore was paid by the foreigner and not by the consumer. When they got beyond that point and outside the limit laid down by the definition of the Prime Minister, then by implication he said the consumer paid the tax. Was it suggested that in passing over this little point of limitation the tax suddenly jumped from the shoulders of the importer to the shoulders of the consumer? Was it not evident that, between the extreme case of tobacco or tea at one end where they all agreed that the consumer paid the tax, and of coal at the other extreme where they all agreed that if there were a tax the foreign importer would pay it, the quantity being so small, there was a large range of articles of which we produced in this country a considerable proportion and on which the duty would be divided between the consumer and the producer? This would be a very different result from that laid down in the definition which he had quoted. The fact was that the foreign importer would pay the tax in proportion as he needed our market and we did not need his goods. The more home production was fostered the less was the tendency for prices to rise. It made no difference to price so long as the amount was the same and it was produced equally cheaply, but it made a great deal of difference to the producer and to his country whether the work was done in his own country or by the foreigner. It had been urged that they could not impose a tariff from which they could derive revenue and at the same time foster industry. If they could make the foreign importer pay any part of the tax, this country would still gain by the relief to the taxpayer, or by fostering Imperial production and Imperial competition would tend to lower prices. Hon. Gentlemen opposite held strongly the view that by no means could any portion of the burden of taxation be thrown upon the foreigner. We brought food from a good many sources of supply and the cost of transit was different in each. Yet the goods were sold at an equal price. The cost of transit for grain from Buenos Ayres was, he was told, 19 cents. a bushel higher than from Winnipeg. Who paid the 19 cents? Was it suggested that the whole of the wheat supply at home and elsewhere was raised in price by 19 cents.? No one suggested that the consumer paid the 19 cents. All that happened was that the Argentine merchant pocketed 19 cents. less profit, a course which he would continue to follow as long as any profit was left to him. If, then, the Argentine corn merchant pocketed less profit than his Canadian rival in order to secure access to our market, why should he not pay a similar burden when imposed under the form of a tax? If he was ready to pay the one burden, he would be willing to pay the other; and the consumer would not pay. What difference would it make to the Argentine farmer whether he paid to the owner of the ship or to the Chancellor of the Exchequer? Hon. Members objected to the preferential system, and yet they supported the most flagrantly preferential system that had been devised—the system by which the foreigner was given a preference in our home market without having to pay one penny towards the upkeep of the country's defence and administration. The people of this country had to pay for the upkeep of their markets, and yet they allowed foreigners to compete with them without paying their fair share. When the traders of this country went into foreign markets they had to pay a toll towards their standing charges, and yet the foreigners were allowed to come into our markets without paying anything towards our standing charges. If any hon. Member kept a shop, would he allow a stranger to come in and sell goods across his counter without paying something towards the upkeep of that shop? If he did, he ventured to think that that business would not be a financial success. It was only a question of choice between one preferential system and another. Hon. Members opposite preferred to give a preference to the foreigner in our markets, but the Opposition believed that preference, like charity, should begin at home.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): I congratulate the hon. Member who has just sat down on being the first Member who has had the courage to speak to the Amendment. He is the only man who has elucidated the doctrine of that Amendment, though I observe that he very carefully chose an opportunity when his Leader was not present before he started on that elucidation. However, I am not sure that I do not owe him a debt of gratitude. He finds me embarrassed with a very considerable deficit, which grows with each subsequent speaker, and he is going to relieve me of my troubles. He tells me that it is no use my taxing any commodity at home; somebody has got to pay that, and it is injurious to industry. But, he says: "I have got a way; you should tax the foreigner." How very odd that that has never occurred to anyone before. I rather wonder why Germany, which has been trying it on for years—and the Germans are not without ingenuity; they are of a very scientific turn of mind, and could produce even a scientific tariff if it were possible—has got to borrow money this year when they could so easily raise it by taxing the foreigner. The hon. Member has been kinder to me than the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. He rather laughed to scorn the notion that he should be called upon to provide details. It was quite enough for him to talk largely and generally about broadening the basis of taxation, but details—he laughed at the idea that he should be asked for them. The hon. Member has been kinder to me, for he has told me that I can tax the foreign coal that comes to this country. He gives that as an illustration, and I am not sure that it is not rather a good illustration of the sort of thing that you can do in the way of raising revenue by taxing a foreign commodity. I find that last year we imported £20,000 worth of foreign coal—18,000 tons. I think the hon. Gentleman suggested that I should place a tax of 2s. a ton on foreign coal, so that I get towards my £6,000,000 for old-age pensions——

*MR. J. F. MASON: I merely used the case of coal as an example of the way the foreign importer would undoubtedly pay the tax if there were one imposed.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I said so, and I am taking the only illustration that the hon. Member was good enough to supply me with. I get £2,000 towards this gigantic deficit I have to face. But that is not all. This is an illustration, in another respect, of the utter futility of this sort of taxation, because it is not reliable. In 1905, when the right hon. Gentleman opposite was Chancellor of the Exchequer, the coal which was imported was £40,000. This year it has gone down by half. You cannot depend on it, and that is an illustration of the sort of thing that happens if you begin taxing these commodities and expect to raise a revenue from them—they are uncertain, they fluctuate. That is not the way to raise revenue when you have got a big deficit to raise. That is the sort of illustration that Germany, who has got to borrow £50,000,000, has followed, and has found herself in financial difficulties. Does any one deny that she is in financial difficulties?

MR. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich): Certainly.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I shall be able to give the facts to the hon. Gentleman. Of course, he does not think it is a difficulty, because he belonged to a Government that always borrowed. "Oh," they said, "you need not pay your debts." There are many men of that kind. They never find it difficult; they go to the first man that will lend them money. It is much easier than taxation — borrow and let your successor pay. [OPPOSITION Cheers.] I am glad to think there is so much appreciation of the services of my right hon. friend in paying off £40,000,000 of the debt created by hon. Gentlemen opposite. The discussion has touched upon everything except the Bill of which we are asking a Second Reading. Hon. Gentlemen have criticised our system of local taxation; they have criticised our fiscal system; they have criticised expenditure; but they have never criticised the one Bill we are asking the House to consider. There are two propositions in the Budget. One is the abolition of the sugar duty.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend): Not the abolition.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: A very considerable reduction of the sugar duty. Has anybody criticised that? The other is a provision, at any rate, for the only old-age pensions that will become due during the current year. There has been no criticism of either of the two main features of the Budget; but an Amendment has been put down which seems to cover the whole ground of finance and three or four propositions have been advanced, all leading up to one conclusion —that it is necessary to broaden the basis of taxation. I note that the very part of the Amendment about which we have heard nothing is how that is to be brought about. My right hon. friend, speaking earlier in the discussion, asked for some particulars. He asked for a statement of what is proposed. We have not had an answer, with the exception of that of the last speaker. We have not had an explanation of the Amendment, which is, I understand, the official Amendment of the Opposition. The hon. Member for Norwood, who made a singularly able speech, said he thought it was a free trade Amendment. I wonder whether that is the view of the hon. Member for Dulwich. Does he accept that interpretation of the Amendment?

MR. BONAR LAW indicated dissent.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: Then the Opposition are not quite agreed as to the meaning of the Amendment, and yet they ask the House of Commons to accept it. In the debate, as far as it has gone, the real issue has been shirked. And no one has any doubt at all that it has been shirked at the instance of the Leader of the Opposition. A very wily strategist, he knows that these fiscal debates are not very useful from a propagandist point of view. They are a great disadvantage from that point of view, for in this House every argument is answered, every statement and figure is tested. It is so much better to leave those things to the gramophone. There is another tactical disadvantage in urging these proposals on the floor of the House. If you go to a constituency you can talk of taxing the particular article which is manufactured in that constituency; but if you go to other constituencies you will find probably that that particular article is the raw material of the manufacture carried on there. But in the House of Commons all constituencies are represented, and we have to consider all industries, and once you begin specifying detailed taxes, you find disagreement—you find that what you would tax for the benefit of one constituency would be to the disadvantage of other constituencies. Therefore, it is far better to relegate this kind of discussion to outside the House of Commons, and that appears to be the strategy of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. I will reply to some of the speeches made in the course of the debate. However inconsistent their proposals may be, I have got to take them more or less one by one. Several speakers have pressed upon the Government the reconsideration of local taxation. There have been various suggestions made to the Government on that head and with regard to some further grants-in-aid. Some hon. Members have suggested that certain services should be taken over by the nation, and others have urged the taxation of land values. I can only deal generally with the whole of these, because they are not strictly relevant to the Budget of the year. Local taxation is a very large and a very urgent question, and one which, I think, will have to be dealt with and dealt with effectively at the earliest possible moment. I have always thought so; but I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman opposite that the Government have done nothing. I agree that there has been an enormous increase in the financial demands of local authorities and in local taxation within the last few years. I was very much struck by the observation of the noble Lord the Member for the Thirsk Division, that since the Agricultural Rating Act the local rates had almost doubled. But I may be permitted to point out—and I am not making this point merely as a *tu quoque*—that the hon. Gentleman admitted that much the largest increase of all was attributable to the Education Act of 1902. The placing of the voluntary schools on the rates involved an increase of £3,000,000. The mere fact of putting all the education of the country on the rates was, on the whole, the best part of that Bill, but it has undoubtedly been in the main the cause of the enormous increase of local taxation in the country. There has also been a very great increase in the burden of maintaining the main roads. That is very largely attributable, probably, to the motor traffic. [AN HON. MEMBER on the OPPOSITION Benches: "No."] During the last five years, more especially, the increase has gone up by leaps and bounds, and during the last ten years the cost of maintaining the roads has increased by something like £20 a mile. That is attributable partly to the fact that the roads are in better condition and much better looked after than they were, but also to a very large extent to the fact that the motor traffic tears them up. However, whatever the cause may be, there has been an enormous increase in the burden of local taxation, and the Government are fully alive to it and to the fact that it has got to be dealt with. Now we propose to do something this year if right hon. and learned Gentlemen opposite will allow us to proceed with our Bill. There is a very considerable relief to local taxation in the Education Bill—considerably over £1,000,000 at any rate, and that is very substantial relief to local taxation.

AN HON. MEMBER (on the OPPOSITION Benches): How much will the rates have to pay?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I say that a very considerable proportion of that sum would go in relief of rates, and I do not doubt that the simplification or rather the unification of our school system will work economically in our educational management. After all, I am not so sure that there is not very great waste at present, and probably the dual system is very largely responsible for that. If you have two schools in a small community, with two staffs, two head teachers, and two assistant teachers, you are practically doubling the expense of the education of that community.

LORD R. CECIL (Marylebone, E.): The right hon. Gentleman forgets the enormous amount saved to the rates by the non-provided schools.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I should agree with the noble Lord if he had said that during the debate on the Bill of 1902. The saving at the present moment is not considerable, and I am certain that it is not equal to the amount wasted through doubling the staffs and doubling the expenditure in all these districts. But I only made that observation in passing, and perhaps I went a little beyond the point raised by the hon. Gentleman opposite. I only point out the extent to which the education rate and the main roads rate are responsible for the increase in local taxation, more especially in the last five or ten years. In order to redress an evil of this kind you have to proceed very carefully, otherwise you cause a greater inequality to one section of the community in trying to redress the balance. The Agricultural Rating Act is a very good example of what has occurred. What the noble Lord the Member for Thirsk has said proves the danger of partial legislation of that kind. He said that since that Act the local burdens have almost doubled, more especially in rural districts. But on whom do the burdens now fall? By the Agricultural Rating Act land has only to bear half its burdens, so that when you double the burdens the other ratepayers in the district bear a far greater proportion of these burdens than they did before. The local tradesmen, the local manufacturer—and it is very important to encourage these rural manufactories, and in that respect Germany beats us—are hit very hard by an operation of that kind. It is very dangerous to deal piecemeal with the problem of local taxation, because if you do you are bound to cast an unfair burden on some section of the community in relieving another for the moment. That is why the Government are proceeding scientifically in a matter of this kind. Scientific local taxation is a very good principle. Our idea, and it was the idea of the late Government as well, is that the first step in dealing with the problem of local taxation is revaluation upon a proper basis—to start with a Valuation Bill for England and Wales. That Bill, I hope, will be introduced in the course of the next few weeks. I have already given an undertaking that it will be introduced in the course of the present session. That is the first step to be taken, and until we get a proper valuation it will be quite impossible to deal with the problem of local taxation. It is not merely the problem of the farmer. It is very largely also the problem of the tradesman. The injustice is that local rates do not always fall upon persons according to their means. Here you are taxing all the raw material of a man's industry. Take the ordinary case of a tradesman. He may be paying at the rate of £200 or £300 a year for the premises in which he conducts his business. He may not be making more than £300 or £400 out of those premises—I am taking now a little provincial town. There may be next door a man with a income of £1,500 a year, living in a house rated at £150 or £200. The man who is only making £300 or £400 out of his trade has to pay more than the man in receipt of an income of £1,500 a year. The latter ought to bear more in proportion to his means. I think that is a very fair proposition. I agree that it is very difficult to apply, and up to the present it has only been applied by means of redressing the balance through grants-in-aid. These are questions which will have to be considered very carefully when you come eventually to setting up your system of local taxation. I will not say anything further as to local taxation at the present moment. Now I come again to the broadening of the basis of taxation. I observe that, as we proceed, all this new taxation, which is to be raised by broadening the basis, is applied to an increasing variety of purposes. It is to be applied to abolishing the sugar duty and the tea duty. It is to be applied for old-age pensions. To-day in the debate the new taxation suggested by hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite is to be applied also to relieving local taxation. I think it will be perfectly obvious that no tax that can possibly be raised will cover the whole of these purposes, and hon. Gentlemen will have to elect which of these purposes they will choose to take. But I wonder whether they consider really what will be the effect of such a scheme as that. We have had no scheme. The proposition is simply a nebulous, vague proposal which is called "broadening the basis of taxation." We have only had certain hints that it means the taxing of manufactured goods, and I suppose, of wheat, although we have not heard anything about it during this debate. It has been most carefully shunned. But the German example has been quoted over and over again. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Dulwich rather challenged a statement which I made that Germany was finding herself in financial difficulties. I wonder whether his attention has been called to a resolution passed by a group of members who support the present Government in Germany, by members of the *Bloc*, not by opponents of the Government. Now this is the resolution which they have just passed—

> "The unfavourable state of the finances of the Empire, which, in spite of repeated efforts to reform the financial system, still exists, is to be attributed to the policy of protection and prohibition which renders all commodities dear."

This resolution, as I have said, has been passed by a group supporting the Government—

> "So long as Germany adheres to such a policy it cannot be expected that a lasting improvement will be experienced in her financial situation."

These are the very suggestions which are made to us in order to effect an improvement in our financial position. The resolution is so very important, and so very germane to the controversy of the hour here, that I will read the whole of it—

> "Meanwhile, in the interests of Germany, both political and commercial, it is necessary speedily to provide for the financial necessities of the Empire."

I really would, if I might, invite the Leader of the Opposition to follow this.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): How many was it passed by?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: It was passed by one of the groups.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Which group?

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: It is the Radical group. Well, it is a group supporting the Government. It is one of the *Bloc*. ["How many?"] The Resolution goes on—

> "To achieve this end the first step should be a far-reaching scheme of taxation upon the moneyed class."

They demand an Imperial income and property tax, the extension of the death duties, a reform of the spirit tax, and it is said that with the increase of the revenue a decrease of expenditure must also be brought about, not only by means of general economy, but also by a simplification and improvement of the entire administration, and more especially the reduction of the financial burden of the German Army in such a manner as will not endanger the national position of the German Empire. Well, that is our policy. Talking about the German position, I should like to say another word. The Prime Minister suggested that next year, after paying about £41,000,000 of Debt, the Sinking Fund might be raided to a certain extent. But in Germany the Sinking Fund has been suspended—and not for social reform, but to meet the current expenditure of the year. That is the difference between a protective country and a free-trade country in the matter of raising revenue. Although we propose to increase by means of this Budget our commitments very considerably, still there is no suggestion that the Sinking Fund should be suspended. So much for German finance. So much for protectionist finance. I repeat, however, the question put by my right hon. friend the Postmaster-General. I think we are entitled to ask for a few more particulars. This is not our proposition; we are simply meeting a proposition which comes from the Opposition. We are told, "You are not raising the revenue in the proper way; you should do it by means of broadening the basis of taxation." We ask hon. Gentlemen opposite would they mind telling us how. What do they mean by it? A tax on manufactured goods is not a productive one for revenue purposes, and the higher you make it the less productive it is; so that the more protective it is the less productive it is. Therefore, you cannot depend upon that for revenue purposes. If you want to raise a revenue by this means you must tax commodities that people must consume. Now what are these? We tax tea, coffee, sugar, beer, and tobacco now. Therefore, if you are to broaden there are only wheat, meat, and dairy produce left. Do hon. Gentlemen propose to tax these in order to broaden the basis? You cannot do it in any other way. I think we are entitled to ask and I specifically ask the hon. Member for Dulwich; he does not as a rule shirk these things. I do not think he does, he has been a perfectly straightforward protectionist all through; it is more than I can say for most of his colleagues—I think I am entitled to ask him for an answer to this question. Is it his idea of broadening the basis of taxation that you should tax wheat and meat and dairy produce?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: This is not relevant.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The right hon. Gentleman says it is not relevant. If it is not relevant what does broadening the basis of taxation mean? If the right hon. Gentleman will say now that he does not mean that I will drop that argument at once. But he dare not say that he does not mean that. It is really not fair to the people of this country. At any rate, if their bread and their meat and their dairy produce are to be taxed I think they ought to be told about it. I do not think it is fair to go on from year to year shirking it, not saying a word about it, organising a conspiracy of silence on your side, telling them "You can talk at large about broadening the basis of taxation, but never mention wheat; laugh at particulars when they are demanded;" and then when you come in to bring in a stiff duty on the whole lot. It is not fair, it is not straightforward; and therefore I ask again—because this is your Amendment—what does it mean? A tax on wheat is the very worst of all taxes; it is worse than tea or sugar, and certainly worse than tobacco, for the simple reason that it is a tax on the very poorest. It hits them much harder than it does the rich. Now Germany, up till recently, was able to produce quite enough wheat to supply her own market; but now year by year they are increasing their imports. And what is the result? Germany raised last year out of the foreign wheat which it imported £6,750,000 of revenue. That was added on to the price *plus* 9d. of trade profit. But that is not all. They imported 50,000,000 cwt. of wheat; they consumed another 64,000,000. What was the result? The 64,000,000 cost exactly the same as the foreign meal *plus* the duty, so that the German poor were taxed, not £6,750,000, but £15,000,000. Out of that £6,750,000 went to the revenue and about £9,000,000 went into somebody else's pocket. It went into the pockets of the manipulator, the landowner, the mortgagee; it certainly did not go into the pocket of the agricultural labourer. who is much worse paid than in this country. The worst of a tax of this kind is that you are really taxing the community £16,000,000, and only £10,000,000 of it goes to the revenue. Taxes on tea, sugar, and tobacco, on the other hand, go straight to the Exchequer, and the country gets the benefit according to the way it is spent. I found a very interesting document in the Exchequer, prepared by one of the ablest masters of political economy, and he points out that when Germany was, comparatively speaking, a free-trade country, living there was practically 3s. as against our 5s. Taking the year when that document was prepared, I think 1903, living in Germany was 6s. as against our 5s. Since then living has gone up higher in Germany, and it is now much nearer 6s. 6d. or 7s. to our 5s., because they have increased their duty on bread and on meat, so much so that there has been a meat famine in some districts. The country where living was cheaper than in this country suddenly becomes in a few years, by means of these protective duties, dearer than in this country. And this is what they call broadening the basis of taxation in order to benefit the poor of this country. Let me point out another thing with regard to Germany. They are proposing to increase their official salaries there. Why? Because the cost of living has gone up so much that the families of the officials do not have enough to make both ends meet. That is the problem they have got to meet. I should have thought that with these examples before us we should have taken good care to shelve the example of Germany with regard to her protective tariff. I think I have dealt with most of the suggestions which have been made in the course of the debate. I have had a good many proposals laid before me as to how to raise revenue for next year. The hon. Member for Hackney was exceedingly liberal. He was going to raise a revenue of £50,000,000 a year and evidently thought he had found £100,000,000 lurking somewhere which we could use for the purpose of reducing the National Debt. I will bear the hon. Member's suggestions in mind. Then the Member for Paddington's virile brain was full of resources. All these hints and suggestions are exceedingly valuable. I will pigeon-hole them very carefully with a view to considering what can be done in the next Budget. There was one suggestion which was common to both sides of the House, and that was the suggestion of economy. Hon. Members on the other side of the House thought we were spending too much and hon. Members on this side of the House agreed with them. But there was no agreement as to the direction in which economies could be effected. I am not sure that that is not the dividing line between the two Parties—the dividing line as to the suggestions for increased taxation. Hon. Members on the other side said: "You must increase taxation"; but they said "You must increase it by taxing the bread of the poor; and we object to your taking the sugar tax off, because the poor contribute to it." That is their suggestion. We say on the other hand: Tax people according to their means. That is the dividing line in taxation. We will come to the dividing line in expenditure. Hon. Members on the other side say: "You are increasing expenditure. The feeding of children, the appointment of Commissioners for planting the people on the soil, housing, old-age pensions—all these items of expenditure you are suggesting result in your spending too much. Pinch and starve in those directions. That is the direction in which you should save." Hon. Members on this side say: "What about the burden of armaments; the Christian communities of the world are spending this year £400,000,000 on the hideous mechanism of human slaughter. If you must economise, that is the direction in which you should seek economy." I am quite willing to take this Budget upon those two principles. If you economise, do not economise at the expense of the provision which Parliament made with fair unanimity for improving the condition of the poorer classes. If you want to increase taxation, place the burden, not upon the bread and meat of the poor, but upon the shoulders of those who are rich enough to bear it.

Motion made, and Question, "That the debate be now adjourned,"—(*Mr. Bonar Law*,)—put, and agreed to.

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES (EXPENSES).

Resolution reported, "That, for the purposes of any Act of the present session to make further provision with respect to University Education in Ireland, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament: (*a*) of the remuneration of the Secretary to the Commissioners, and of any persons appointed or employed by them, and of any expenses incurred by the Commissioners in the execution of such Act; and (*b*) of grants for the purposes of either of the new Universities, or of the constituent colleges of the new University at Dublin, or of the governing bodies thereof."

Resolution read a second time.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said that this was not a Resolution to which he had the smallest objection, but at the same time a pledge was given by the Government the other day that twenty-four hours notice should be given of Resolutions of this kind, and perhaps in these circumstances it would be as well that the Government should defer it for twenty-four hours.

Mr. J. A. PEASE (Essex, Saffron Walden) said that on Thursday it was impossible to give notice, but he took an opportunity of officially intimating to the Opposition whips that he proposed to take the Resoluion on Monday.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR said he was not aware of that fact, and he withdrew his objection.

Sir F. BANBURY said that no arrangement to that effect was intimated to the general body of Members on that side of the House, and an hon. Member who had an Amendment had gone away, not expecting the Motion to come on. Accidentally the hon. Gentleman had broken the arrangement, and he would suggest that the Resolution should be taken on the next night after eleven o'clock.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.) said it did not make any dieffrence to him whether they took this Resolution to-night or next day.

Resolution to be further considered to-morrow.

Adjourned at ten minutes after Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 2nd June, 1908.

The House met at a quarter before Three of the Clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE)

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz. :—Wye Fisheries Provisional Order Bill ; Usk Fisheries Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time To-morrow.

Ards and Bangor Railways Bill (by Order).—Read a second time, and committed.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 9) Bill.—Read a second time, and committed.

Standing Orders.—Resolution reported from the Select Committee, "That, in the case of the River Wandle Protection [Lords], Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with :—That the parties be permitted to proceed with their Bill."

Resolution agreed to.

Tramways Order Confirmation (No. 1) Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

Bill to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 1) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Title amended] [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 6) Bill.—Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 7) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Orders confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

Local Government Provisional Order (No. 8) Bill.—Reported, without Amendment [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time To-morrow.

King's College, London (Transfer) Bill [Lords].—Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table.

Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—Reported, without Amendment, from the Select Committee on Divorce Bills, with Minutes of Proceedings; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill to be read the third time.

Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords].—Ordered, That the Minutes of Evidence and Proceedings in the House of Lords on the Second Reading of Hurly's Divorce Bill [Lords], together with the Documents deposited in the cases, be returned to the House of Lords.—(*Mr. Attorney-General.*)

PETITIONS.

CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Grimsby; Iden Green; and Kilburn; to lie upon the Table.

An Asterisk (*) at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

LICENSING BILL.

Petitions against: From Bassetlaw; Hallamshire (two); North East Derbyshire; Sheffield; and South Huntingdonshire; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions for alteration: From Grimsby; Iden Green; Kilburn; and Saltney Ferry; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour: From Acton; Belfast; Bermondsey (two); Bledington; Catford; Chelsea; Chiswick; Cwmllynfell; Dyserth; Edinburgh; Findhorn; Forest Hill; Garth; Gronant; Hampstead; Hamsterley; Keighley; Leicester; Mold; Neston; Otterburn; Rochdale; Trenddyn; Tring; Watford (three); and Yorkshire (West Riding); to lie upon the Table.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC (LOCAL OPTION) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour: From Bridge of Allan; and St. Andrew's to lie upon the Table.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS BILL.

Petition from Lewisham, against; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

EAST INDIA (DEATHS FROM PLAGUE, ETC.)

Return [presented 1st June] to be printed. [No. 160.]

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES.

Copy presented, of Annual Reports of Proceedings under the Diseases of Animals Acts, the Markets and Fairs (Weighing of Cattle) Acts, etc., for the year 1907 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS, 1894 TO 1903.

Copy presented, of Order, dated the 23rd May, 1908. defining a Foreign Animals' Quarantine Station at Irongate Wharf, in the City of London [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

Copy presented, of Order, dated 25th May, 1908, revoking Order No. 7487. of 23rd May, 1908, defining a Foreign Animals' Quarantine Station at Irongate Wharf, in the City of London [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

POLLING DISTRICTS (COUNTY OF SALOP).

Copy presented, of Order made by the Council of the County of Salop with respect to the Polling Districts in the four Parliamentary Divisions of the County [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

EDUCATION (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Reports, Statistics, etc., on Continuation Classes and Central Institutions (Scotland), 1906–7 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COMMERCIAL TREATIES (COMMERCIAL, No. 4, 1908.)

Copy presented, of Return showing the countries between which Commercial Treaties were in force on 1st January, 1908 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series, Nos. 4001 and 4002 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS SECURITIES.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 29th April; *Mr. Hobhouse*]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 161.]

PUBLIC INCOME AND EXPENDITURE.

Return ordered, "of net Public Income and net Public Expenditure under certain specified heads, as represented by receipts into and issues out of the Exchequer from 1893–4 to 1907–8 inclusive (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 254, of Session 1907)."—(*Mr. Ellis.*)

EAST INDIA (FINANCIAL STATEMENT).

Address for "Return of the Indian Financial Statement for 1908–9, and of the Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General thereon."—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CIRCULATED WITH THE VOTES.

England and France and Death Duties.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, in regard to the agreement between England and France with respect to death duties, it is to be understood that information hitherto confidential, and furnished confidentially, to the Inland Revenue authorities is now disclosed for the purpose of complying with Article No. 1 of the said agreement.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The information referred to is obtained from documents which, although neither confidential nor furnished confidentially, are not open to public inspection.

Compensation for Injuries to West at Enfield Lock Factory.

MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): To ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been directed to the case of —— West, a workman at Enfield Lock factory, who, after being injured several times in the course of following his employment, has been offered a small and, as he considers, an inadequate sum, in compensation; and if the case can be reconsidered with a view to the grant of a pension at least equal to the sum which would be awarded under the Compensation Act of 1906.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) I beg to refer the hon. Member to the numerous replies which have been given to Questions on this subject during the present session, and in particular to the Answer of my predecessor on 25th March last to the hon. Member for Enfield. I can hold out no hope of any further assistance for this man from public funds.

Conflicting Duties of Home Office Surgeons.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the apparent inconsistency of surgeons appointed by the Home Office to official positions, as, for example, those of medical referee or certifying surgeon, holding at the same time positions in which they have to represent an interest sometimes at variance with their official functions; whether in consequence the same surgeon often has to act judicially and also to be called as a witness by a litigant in the same case; whether the certifying surgeons in the Potteries districts hold appointments from the Potteries Insurance Company; whether such certifying surgeons investigate on behalf of the insurance company cases of suspected lead poisoning first diagnosed by the medical attendant of the workmen and attend the directors' meeting to be consulted by the insurance company upon cases in their respective districts; whether a workman can only receive compensation for disablement from a scheduled disease if he first obtains a certificate, while in the event of appeal against refusal of a certificate the certifying surgeon is often retained by the insurance company or employers to represent them in appeal; whether he will consider the possibility of providing in future appointments for a greater separation of duties; and, in the case of lead poisoning, whether he will allow the matter to be considered by the Departmental Committee.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) In the case of medical referees under the Workmen's Compensation Act, it is, with few exceptions, made a condition of appointment that the referee shall not hold any position such as that of a works doctor or medical officer of a workmen's club, or any regular employment from an accident insurance company, which might cause him to be regarded as representing the interests of any party in cases arising under the Act. The case of certifying surgeons, who are primarily appointed for duties under the Factory Act, stands on a somewhat different footing, and no similar condition is imposed. I have made inquiries, however, of the certifying surgeons in the Potteries districts and am informed by them that they do not hold appointments from the Potteries Insurance Company, and do not investigate on behalf of the company cases of suspected lead poisoning or attend the directors meetings. It appears that in pursuance of an arrangement made before the passing of The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, in connection with the scheme of insurance in the special rules, the certifying surgeons have made weekly examinations of operatives who had been suspended by them under the rules and furnished the worker with a certificate of his condition. There have been very few appeals so far against the determination of certifying surgeons, in the first nine months ten, of which two only referred to lead cases, and I cannot say whether the certifying surgeon has appeared before the referee or not. The certificate of the surgeon which is appealed against has, under the Secretary of State's rules, to be submitted to the referee, who is also required to consider any statements made or submitted by either party. If either party wishes to submit any explanation by the certifying surgeon of the grounds for his decision, I do not think that could properly be prevented. As regards the point raised by my right hon. friend in the penultimate sentence of the Question, this is already provided for, as above stated, in the case of medical referees, and as regards certifying surgeons it has not escaped my consideration. It would not, however, be possible to lay down a strict rule, because in industrial districts it is often difficult to find a well-qualified medical man who does not hold some appointment from employers or associations of workpeople. The question would be outside the scope of the reference to the Lead Committee, but I shall be happy to inquire into any case of grievance which may have come to the notice of my right hon. friend.

Dangerous Street Crossing in Theobald's Road.

Mr. REMNANT (Finsbury, Holborn): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the dangerous condition of the junction of Southampton Row and Theobald's Road, Holborn, and the London County Council tramway subway, where, within five weeks recently, no less than seven deaths have been caused by accidents due to the dangerous condition of the traffic; and whether he will ask the Chief Commissioner of Police to give extra police protection to the public at this spot.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) The Commissioner of Police is aware that the heavy traffic of all kinds which passes along Theobald's Road renders it dangerous as a thoroughfare, and the two chief points of danger are its junctions with Southampton Row and Gray's Inn Road. At each of these points there are two constables regulating the traffic, and a police patrol has recently been stationed to prevent dangerous driving on the section between these points. Moreover police on beat duty have orders to give special attention to traffic there. The omnibus companies have also been asked to instruct their drivers to exercise special caution in this road. I understand that there have been five persons killed in Theobald's Road this year, but that there has been no fatal accident at its junction with Southampton Row since the opening of the London County Council tramway subway in February, 1906.

Renewal of Leases of Licensed Premises.

Mr. YOUNGER (Ayr Burghs): To ask the Prime Minister whether, under under the Licensing Bill, a licence holder holding a long lease of on-licensed premises at a rack-rent will, on the expiration of the time-limit, continue liable to pay such rent although the licence has terminated; and whether in the event of the said licensee obtaining a re-grant of the licence as a new licence under Clause 3 (1), he will have to pay the monopoly value of the licence, although that value is already included in the rent he is paying under the covenants of the lease.

(*Answered by Mr. Asquith.*) The question is one which depends upon the terms of the particular contract between the parties to the lease, and on the legal construction of such contract, upon which I am not in a position to advise. In view of the long notice which it is proposed should be given of the intention of Parliament to secure the monopoly value to the State, I doubt whether, in practice, any cases of hardship such as are contemplated by the Question will arise.

Amalgamation of Colonial Audit Branch with the Exchequer and Audit Department.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, with reference to the recent amalgamation of the old Colonial Audit Branch with the main establishment of the Exchequer and Audit Department, he will give a reference to the next previous case where three men or more were simultaneously granted certificates under Clause VII. of the Order in Council of 4th June, 1870, the effect of which was to introduce them into a department on a permanent footing but with higher emoluments than existing officials of the same rank who were employed on the same duties, and who entered the Civil Service by open competition.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) I beg to refer the hon. Member to my predecessor's reply of 6th April last, which explained the dissimilarity in the position of the two classes referred to.

Appointments as Inspecting Surveyor of Customs.

MR. SLOAN (Belfast, S.): To ask the Secretary to the Treasury how many vacancies have occurred in the grade of inspecting surveyor in the Customs since the creation of that office; and how many such vacancies were filled by candidates who joined the Customs service as clerks and the outdoor department, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) I am informed that there have been eight vacancies in the grade of inspecting surveyor since its creation, seven of which were filled by officers who entered the Department as clerks, and the eighth by an officer who entered as an outdoor officer. In deciding on the grade from which appointments shall be made in each case the Board are guided solely by the position held by an officer at the time the selection is made, and not by the rank he held when he joined the Department. Of the eight officers appointed four were surveyors in the outdoor department and four collectors prior to their selection for the post of inspecting surveyor.

Education of Roman Catholic Children in Protestant Countries abroad.

MR. HUTTON (Yorkshire, W.R., Morley): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether he will present a Parliamentary Paper showing what is the position of Roman Catholic schools or the children of Roman Catholic parents in the Protestant cantons of Switzerland, in the Protestant states of Germany, in Holland, in the United States, and in the Colonies; also stating what is the position of the children of Protestant parents in Italy, Spain, Austria, and Belgium.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) The Board hope to publish in the course of a few days a Parliamentary Paper dealing with the system known as the "allocation of rates" in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The volumes of special Reports on educational subjects which from time to time have been issued by the Board describe the educational systems in some of the countries named, but I fear that the Board possess no detailed or collated information on the subject. The compilation of a Return or Memorandum in sufficient detail to be of any value on this very complicated question would involve the collection of a large mass of material from foreign and Colonial Governments, and, owing to the complexity of some of the systems, would further necessitate local investigations. I regret, therefore, that the magnitude of the work is too great to admit of the Board undertaking it with the staff at their disposal. I may at the same time draw the attention of my hon. friend to the list of books and papers on religious instruction in schools in various parts of the world issued by the Board in 1906 [Cd. 3208]. Information on the point referred to in my hon. friend's Question will be found in most of the books and pamphlets named on pages 44 to 74, inclusive, of that document. Most of these documents can be consulted at the Board of Education library.

Noxious Vapours from Motor Vehicles.

MR. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the growing practice on the part of drivers of motor vehicles of discharging volumes of oil-smoke from the exhaust pipes of the cars, to the great inconvenience of the general public; whether the police have had any instructions issued to them for dealing with this nuisance; and who is responsible for those instructions being carried out.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I can only answer for the Metropolitan police district, and I do not think this evil is increasing there, at any rate in proportion to the greatly increased number of motor vehicles now on the streets. With regard to motor cars, when the emission of smoke is due to any temporary or accidental cause, which I believe is almost invariably the case, the police have no power to take any action. As regards motor cabs and motor omnibuses, it is a condition of their licensing in London that "the lubrication of the engine or the carburation of the working mixture must be so controlled that smoke is not projected with the exhaust, or from any other part." A large number of vehicles have been, and are being, dealt with under this rule, and ordered off the streets till their defects are remedied.

Sunday Closing Shops Bill.

MR. McARTHUR (Liverpool, Kirkdale): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can say when the Sunday Closing of Shops Bill [Lords] will be proceeded with.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) It has been already stated in another place that the Government are unable, in the existing state of public business, to afford any facilities to the Bill.

Medical Referees under the Workmen's Compensation Act.

MR. HILLS (Durham): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many medical referees were appointed under the Workmen's Compensation Act prior to the Act of 1907 coming into force; how many references were referred to each such referee; how many times the county court judges have asked such medical referees to act as assessors with them or called them in to advise them as to their judgments; and have the Channel Islands, and Guernsey in particular, refused to adopt the Act.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) If I understand the first part of the hon. Member's inquiry rightly, he desires to know how many medical referees have been appointed for the purposes of the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906. The number is 343. The total number of references made to referees in the nine months from 1st July, 1907, the date on which the Act of 1906 came into force, up to 31st of last March, the latest date for which figures are available, is 189. Of these references twelve were made under Section 8 of the Act, twenty-eight under Paragraph 15 of Schedule I., and 149 under Paragraph 15 of Schedule II. The number of cases during the same period in which referees have been summoned to sit as assessors is thirty-three. The States of both Jersey and Guernsey have deliberated on the question of enacting legislation for the islands on the lines of our Act of 1906, but in both cases the proposal was rejected.

Fatal Accident at the Workshops for the Blind Belfast.

MR. J. DEVLIN (Belfast, W.): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to a fatal accident which occurred recently in the Workshops for the Blind, Belfast, whereby a boy of eleven years of age sustained injuries from falling into a tank of boiling water, which resulted in his death; whether he is aware that the boy was one of some fifteen or sixteen other boys who are employed to lead the blind workers to their work and home again; whether he will say if the tank referred to is sufficiently protected; and, if not, whether he will see that steps are taken to prevent such an accident in future.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have obtained a report by telegram from His Majesty's inspector, from which it appears that the boy in question was not employed within the meaning of the Factory Act, and that the children, of whom he was one, who lead the blind workers to and from their homes daily, are not supposed to enter the premises at all. The boy, instead of passing between the tanks where there was a passage, climbed over the parapet of the tank and fell in. The tank is adequately fenced by a wall three feet three inches in height and fifteen inches broad. Precautions have been taken to prevent these children from entering the premises in future.

Protection of Property at Belfast Harbour.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the statement made in Belfast police court, on behalf of the Belfast Harbour Commissioners, as to wholesale larcenies having taken place recently on the quays, for the policing of which the Commissioners are responsible; whether he can state the number of police under the control of the Harbour Commissioners and the annual cost of the same; and whether he will direct the attention of the Commissioners to the necessity of taking proper precautions to safeguard the property of persons using the quays.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I am informed by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners that they are unaware of any statement having been made on their behalf as to the number of larcenies on their quays. They state that the number of policemen employed by them is sixty-eight, and the annual cost £4,868 17s. 3d., and that during the twelve months ending 31st May last there were 113 arrests for larceny.

Sale of the Estate of J. P. Evans, at Knockaderry.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can say how matters stand with regard to the sale of the estate of J. P. Evans, situate at Knockaderry, Newcastle West, in the County of Limerick, to the tenants; whether he is aware that agreements for purchase were signed by the tenants about four years ago, and that they are still getting receipts from the agent and receiver on account of rent; and if he will say why it is that the Estates Commissioners are not collecting the interest on the purchase amounts agreed on by the tenants.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) The Estates Commissioners have had the estate in question inspected with a view to making an offer to the Land Judge for its purchase under Section 7 of the Act of 1903. The inspector's report has been received, and will be considered by the Commissioners in due course. It is not the practice of the Commissioners to collect interest from the tenants in such cases until the Land Judge has accepted their offer to purchase.

Methylated Spirit Drinking in Ulster.

MR. J. DEVLIN: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the continued prevalence of the habit of drinking methylated spirits as a substitute for alcohol in Ulster, and particularly in County Derry; and whether he will consider the possibility of taking some effective steps to mitigate this evil, which is a danger to the health of the labouring classes in the districts affected.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I have obtained reports from the police authorities which go to show that the practice in question does not now prevail in Ulster to any considerable extent. In some parts of County Tyrone the practice is stated to exist to a small extent, and in the city of Londonderry a few cases have from time to time come under the notice of the police; but the practice appears to be on the decrease. Under the Spirits Acts, 1880, any person who sells methylated spirits as a beverage incurs a penalty of £100, which is recoverable by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue. The police have been instructed to afford all possible assistance to the Inland Revenue authorities in the prevention and detection of the offence in question.

Regulations under the Sugar Convention.

MR. HERBERT (Buckinghamshire, Wycombe): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Additional Act of 28th August, 1907, especially having regard to Article 3, operated as a notice terminating the existing Sugar Convention on 1st September, 1908, and as the making of a fresh and different Convention for five years from 1st September, 1908; and, seeing that the Sugar Convention Act, 1903, which authorised the making of Orders in Council and regulations under the original Convention, cannot give validity to regulations carrying out a fresh Convention upon different terms and for a period not contemplated by the Act of 1903, will he say whether it is proposed to introduce a Bill to give power to make Orders in Council and regulations which will be valid after 1st September, 1908.

(*Answered by Secretary Sir Edward Grey.*) In reply to the first part of the Question, I beg to refer the hon. Member to Paragraph 1 of Article 1 of the Additional Act, where it is stated that "the contracting States undertake to maintain the Convention of 5th March, 1902, in force for a fresh period of five years, commencing on 1st September, 1908." With regard to the necessity for further legislation suggested in the second part of the Question, I would refer the hon. Member to my reply to his Question on 27th May, and to the reply given in this House on 26th May to a Question put by the hon. Member for Brighton.

Darfield Council Schools.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether any, and, if so, what, grant has been paid in respect of the temporary council school erected at Darfield for the week commencing Monday, 1st September, 1907; whether he is aware that the school was not completed at that period; and can he say whether the Catholic school at Low Valley will now be restored to the grant list, seeing that the conditions laid down by his predecessor in office as to the provision of a temporary council school at Darfield were not fulfilled on the appointed day.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman.*) I am informed that the temporary council school was opened on 2nd September. The claim for grant has not yet been received. I understand that certain persons have given notice of their intention to provide a new Catholic school, and that the local education authority have appealed under Section 8 of the Education Act, 1902, on the ground that the proposed school is not required. It will be the duty of the Board to decide the issue under Section 9 of that Act.

Prosecutions under the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act.

MR. WALTER LONG (Dublin, S.): To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the total number of persons proceeded against for offences under Section 2 of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act, 1887, on the last occasion when the provisions of the section were operative; the results of such proceedings; the number of cases in which appeals were taken from the decisisons of resident magistrates, and the results of such appeals; and the number of persons in respect of whom cases were stated for the opinion of the High Court of Judicature, with results.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) Proclamations under Section 2 of the Criminal Law and Procedure (Ireland) Act were last in force from 16th April, 1902, to 14th July, 1903. Several prosecutions, however, took place under Subsection 3 (*a*) of Section 2 in which case a proclamation is not necessary, between 13th August, 1901, and the issue of the proclamations on 16th April, 1902. Between 13th August, 1901, and 21st January, 1903, when the last of the prosecutions took place, the total number of persons proceeded against under Section 2 was 189, of whom 129 were convicted, forty-three discharged, and seventeen ordered to find sureties. Appeals were taken in the case of fifty-four persons, the results being that as regards twenty persons the decision was affirmed, as regards thirty the sentence was reduced, and in the case of the remaining four persons the decision was reversed. Cases were stated for the opinion of the High Court in four cases comprising seventeen defendants. In three of the cases the magistrates' decisions were upheld, and in the remaining case the decision was upheld as regards one of the three defendants and reversed as regards the other two.

Extension of Public Trustee Act to Ireland.

MR. WALTER LONG: To ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will consider the advisability of extending the Public Trustee Act to Ireland.

(*Answered by Mr. Birrell.*) I would refer the right hon. Gentleman to the answer which I gave to a similar Question put by the hon. Member for North Wexford on 25th May.

Extra Messing Allowance to Sergeant Instructors of Volunteers.

MR. GRETTON (Rutland): To ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that the additional allowance of £10 per annum sanctioned by the General Officer Commanding, Northern Command, to be given to sergeant instructors of Volunteers, in consideration of the extra price of meat, bread, groceries, fuel, and light outside barracks has been withdrawn on the formation of the Territorial Force; and if he can state why that allowance has been withdrawn.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Haldane.*) Any payment of the nature indicated would have been confined to particular Volunteer corps and paid out from the corps funds. As I explained yesterday, the Army Council will consider recommendations made by associations for increase of the authorised allowances in the case of sergeant instructors performing extra work.

Closing of Liquor Shops in Bombay.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he is aware that the Indian Excise Committee, 1905–6 recommended that liquor shops should be closed at 9 p.m. or earlier; whether the Government of India adopted this recommendation and issued orders accordingly whether the Excise Commissioner in Bombay has fixed 9.30 as the hour of closing, and that in certain cases shops will remain open until midnight; and whether he can state what are the special reasons for this departure from the general policy approved by the Government of India.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) The recommendation of the Committee was that as a general rule the closing hour should be fixed at 9 p.m., but that this limit might be relaxed in special cases, when a special fee should be levied. The Government of India accepted this recommendation, and issued orders accordingly. As to the action taken in Bombay, the Secretary of State has no information, but he will inquire.

Construction of Bhamo-Teng Yueh Railway.

EARL OF RONALDSHAY (Middlesex, Hornsey): To ask the Under-Secretary of State for India what is the estimated cost of construction of a metre-gauge steam-traction line of railway from Bhamo, in Burma, to Teng Yueh, in Yunnan, and from Teng Yueh to Tali Fu; what are the estimated length, ruling gradient, degree of sharpest curve, amount of rise and fall, and number and length of tunnels in each case; and what is the estimated return that might be looked for on the capital invested on the completion of the two lines, and the time necessary for construction in each case.

(*Answered by Mr. Buchanan.*) It would not be in the public interest to give the detailed facts and figures asked for by the noble Lord.

Pay of Colonial Local and Assistant Auditors.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the old Colonial Audit Branch men now serving abroad had their prospects as local auditors and assistant auditors confined to a minimum of £300 and a maximum of £600 a year; whether those of them who elect to enter the newly amalgamated Department will have home scales of pay open to them up to £1,000 a year; if so, will he explain the statement of the Comptroller and Auditor-General to the effect that such officials will in future have their pensions calculated on the home scales of pay instead of, as heretofore, on the higher Colonial rates.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) The statement of the Comptroller and Auditor-

General had reference to existing conditions, not to remote contingencies. Members of the old Colonial Audit Branch (who were in receipt of salaries varying from £300—£700 per annum, and entitled to be pensioned on those actual salaries) would, on accepting the new terms, be eligible for a pension on rates of pay rising from £100—£350 per annum only. The answer to the second part of the Question is in the affirmative.

Rates of Pay of Colonial Auditors.

Mr. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the rates of pay of the old Colonial Audit Branch local auditors and assistant auditors in each of the various Crown Colonies and Protectorates, and the new rates of local allowance applicable to each of such places.

(Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.)

Colony or Protectorate.	Appointment.	Old rate of pay.	Local allowance, now applicable in addition to E. and A. D. salary.
		£	£
Gold Coast	Local auditor	400—20—500	200
	Assistant auditors	300—10—400	150*
Southern Nigeria	Local auditor	550—20—700	300
	Assistant auditors	300—10—400	150*
Cyprus	Local auditor	400—20—500	200
Sierra Leone	Local auditor	400—20—500	200
	Assistant auditors	300—10—400	150*
Gibraltar	Local auditor	300—10—350	150
Gambia	Local auditor	300—10—400	150*
Uganda	Local auditor	400—15—500	200
	Assistant auditors	300—10—400	150
Nyassaland	Local auditor	400—15—500	200
	Assistant auditors	300—10—400	150
East Africa	Local auditor	550—20—700	300
	Assistant auditors	300—10—400	150
Northern Nigeria	Local auditor	400—20—500	200
	Assistant auditors	300—10—400	150*
Hong Kong	Local auditor	650—20—800	300
	Assistant auditors	300—10—400	150

* With minimum of £300 in respect of salary plus allowance.

Reorganisation of Estate Duty Office.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will state the main outlines of the new reorganisation scheme in the Estate Duty Office, as it affects the old Second Division staff in that Department.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) Under the scheme in question, the Second Division staff in the Estate Duty Office will disappear. A limited number will be absorbed into the new establishment as opportunity offers, and the rest will be transferred to other offices.

Entrance Examination for the Estate Duty Office Clerkships.

MR. FIELD: To ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether, seeing that the subjects set in the new examination for the estate duty office bear no relation to the departmental work, that this examination has admittedly been framed to suit the educational curriculum of the public schools, and that second division clerks have heretofore efficiently performed the duties of that department, he will explain why these senior and experienced men are not given the opportunity to share, according to their length of service, in the higher emoluments now offered to new entrants for performing the same duties.

(*Answered by Mr. Hobhouse.*) It is not a fact that the second division clerks in the estate duty office have heretofore performed the duties of that department. As a general rule they have only performed such of those duties as are proper to clerks of the second division. Selected members of the class will be considered for promotion to the new higher establishment.

Date of Launching of Scottish Fishery Protection Cruisers.

Mr. R. L. HARMSWORTH (Caithness-shire): To ask the Secretary for Scotland if he can state the dates of he launching of vessels employed by the Fishery Board for Scotland in the prevention of illegal trawling.

(*Answered by Mr. Sinclair.*) The fishery cruiser "Vigilant" was built in 1886, the "Brenda" in 1898, the "Minna in 1900, and the "Freya" in 1904.

Ordnance Survey Maps.

MR. FETHERSTONHAUGH (Fermanagh, N.): To ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if the Ordnance maps of the recent survey printed by the cheaper process of zinc or stone plates on soft-surfaced paper are sold to the public at the same prices as the maps of former surveys produced by the more expensive process of printing from copper plates on hard-surfaced paper; is he aware that, owing to the running of ink and colours on the new soft-surfaced paper, the maps are much less convenient for use for the chief purpose for which the public require them, namely, to colour and write on for use in the Land Commission; and will he take steps to reduce the cost of the soft-surfaced maps.

(*Answered by Sir Edward Strachey.*) The 6-inch maps printed from zinc or stone are sold at the same price as those printed from copper plates. There is no difficulty in applying ink and colours to the paper on which these maps are printed in the condition in which they are issued, and in view of the cost entailed in the preparation of these maps no reduction in their price can be made.

Entrance Examination for Admiralty Writers.

MR. E. H. LAMB (Rochester): To ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether the Civil Service examination for entry on to the permanent staff of writers was found to be unsatisfactory, and, if so, in what respects; and whether, since its abolition, an equal number of candidates of equal merit have been forthcoming.

(*Answered by Mr. McKenna.*) The Civil Service examination for the entry of copyists was not found to be unsatisfactory, but since its abolition the Admiralty have had no difficulty in obtaining as many men of this class as required, and their merits have been quite equal to those of the copyists entered by the Civil Service Commission.

Overtime of Boys in the Fairfield Shipbuilding Yard.

MR. W. T. WILSON (Lancashire, Westhoughton): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the boys employed at the Fairfield Shipbuilding Company's yard at Govan are still working overtime; and whether he will give instructions to the factory inspector there to make strict inquiries into the matter, with the object of preventing this company compelling boys who are under a certain age to work overtime.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) These works were visited again on 26th May by two inspectors, when three young persons were found working illegal overtime. A second prosecution is under consideration. The inspector reports that the firm have now posted notices in the works prohibiting the employment of young persons after hours by foremen or sub-contractors. Other visits will be paid.

Desecration of Graves at Tisbury.

MR. MORSE (Wiltshire, Wilton): To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the desecration of graves which has taken place in the parish churchyard in Tisbury, in Wiltshire, in the recent digging of a trench for drainage purposes; and whether he will say what steps he proposes to take in the matter.

(*Answered by Mr. Secretary Gladstone.*) I have no information on the matter to which my hon. friend refers; but I will make immediate inquiries and give the facts my careful consideration.

Imports of Wholly-Manufactured Articles.

EARL OF RONALDSHAY: To ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will state the aggregate value of the wholly-manufactured articles imported into this country in a state ready for consumption in the years 1906 and 1907, respectively.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill.*) I must refer the noble Lord to the printed Answer to the Question asked by the hon. Member for Hythe on 25th May, of which I am sending him a copy.

Importation of French Silver Goods.

MR. AMUEL ROBERTS (Sheffield, Ecclesall): To ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, with respect to the proposal to admit into this country, without any test, silver goods bearing the French mark only, he will take no action in the matter until he has received the views of those interested in the British trade, which they propose laying before him.

(*Answered by Mr. Churchill*). The hon. Member may rest assured that no action would be taken in the direction indicated in his Question without full consideration being given to the views of those likely to be interested.

Undenominational Religious Teaching—The Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

SIR W. J. COLLINS (St. Pancras, W.): To ask the President of the Board of Education whether the Board regard the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed as falling within the undenominational religious instruction which may be given in accordance with Clause 14 of the Education Act of 1870, as well as the Apostles' Creed, which the Board have decided is not a religious formulary prohibited by that clause.

(*Answered by Mr. Runciman*). I beg to refer my hon. friend to the Answer which I gave yesterday.

QUESTIONS IN THE HOUSE.

Joint Naval and Military Exercises.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER (Croydon): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether during the past twelve months the Army Council have asked for the co-operation of the Board of Admiralty in carrying out joint naval and military exercises; whether the application has been refused; if so, whether it has been refused on the grounds of economy; and whether, in view of the great importance of such joint manœuvres, and of the fact that this country cannot engage in any war in which the co-operation of the Army and Navy will not be necessary, the Board of Admiralty will consider their decision and will co-operate effectively with the Army Council.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. MCKENNA, Monmouthshire, N.): During the past twelve months, no application from the War Office for the co-operation of the Admiralty in carrying out joint naval and military exercises has been refused. The Admiralty recognise the importance of co-operation between the Army and Navy, and many joint exercises have been carried out during the past twelve months.

MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): Will joint exercises of this nature take place during the coming summer?

MR. MCKENNA asked for notice of the Question.

Naval Mechanicians.

MR. BARNES (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty how many mechanicians are now serving afloat in His Majesty's ships; what duties do they perform; are they in addition to or part of ships' complements; and, if the latter, what number of engine-room artificers are thus displaced.

MR. MCKENNA—

	Approx.
Mechanicians confirmed in that rating	80
Acting mechanicians	70
Total	150

The primary duty of mechanicians is keeping watch in the engine-room when the ship is under way; when not under way, they are employed on such repair work as does not require the highest skill. Confirmed mechanicians are part of the ship's complement—acting mechanicians are additional to complement. At the present time two confirmed mechanicians replace the engine-room artificer, and one stoker in a ship's complement. The number of mechanicians sent to any one ship is limited to six.

Naval Engine-room Artificers.

MR. BARNES: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty by whose authority and for what reason has the standard for entry of engine-room artificers into His Majesty's service been recently reduced; and are candidates allowed a second opportunity of competing directly after failing to pass, or must a specified period elapse before another trial is permitted.

MR. MCKENNA: No reduction has recently been made in the standard for entry of engine-room artificers. There is no specified period which must elapse before a second trial is allowed to a candidate who has failed to pass, the examining officers at the ports alone being in the position to judge whether it is any use allowing a man who has failed another attempt, and if so, how soon he should present himself for re-examination.

Army Council.

CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any member of the Army Council has ever served in the Horse or Field Artillery; and, if so, for how long.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. ACLAND, Yorkshire, Richmond): Yes, Sir. The Master-General of the Ordnance served for eight years in a battery of Field Artillery and three years in a battery of Horse Artillery.

Cadet Corps.

MAJOR COATES (Lewisham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War when he expects to be able to issue regulations fixing the relations of cadet corps to the Territorial Forces; and if, in the meantime, he is able to sanction the formation of cadet corps.

MR. ACLAND: The *status* of cadet corps, other than those who will be invited to join the officers' training corps, will be considered with County Associations as soon as they have had time to work out the main questions connected with the Territorial Force, which now claim their attention. In the meanwhile it is not proposed to entertain any applications for raising new corps.

The Mohmand Rising.

Dr. RUTHERFORD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether the effort on the part of the Government of India to extend the railroad into the territory of the Mohmands was an important factor in bringing about hostilities on the North-West Frontier.

Sir H. COTTON (Nottingham, E.): At the same time may I ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether alarm was excited among the Mohmands by the construction of the Loi-Shilman strategic railway in a direction north of the Khyber; whether the agitation among them against the railway began many months ago; whether this railway and the surveys for its extension were one of the chief animating impulses of the hostility which culminated when the Mohmands appeared in arms at Shabkadr; and whether all further operations on that railway have now been abandoned.

The UNDER-SECRETARY for INDIA (Mr. Buchanan, Perthshire, E.) I stated last Tuesday the main causes which in the opinion of the Secretary of State led to the recent Mohmand rising, and no direct evidence has been brought before us to show that the construction of the Loi-Shilman Railway was one of these causes. On the contrary the Mohmand tribes whose territory is nearest to the railway have been friendly throughout the recent operations. As regards the future of the railway I have nothing to add to the Answer which I gave last Tuesday to the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean.

Mr. SMEATON (Stirlingshire) asked the hon. Gentleman whether it would not be better to be perfectly candid and admit at once that the railway was the sole cause of the rising.

[No Answer was returned.]

Sir H. COTTON asked whether all further operations on this railway had been abandoned.

Mr. BUCHANAN: I stated last Tuesday that the railway had been sanctioned up to milestone 300 from Lahore, and no proposal for extending it beyond that point is at present before the Secretary of State.

Sir H. COTTON asked the hon. Gentleman whether he could explain the exact need for the construction of the railway.

Mr. BUCHANAN: All that has been before the House on previous occasions.

The Fighting at Kharga.

Mr. MACKARNESS (Berkshire, Newbury): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether he can state approximately the number of killed, wounded, and prisoners on the British and Mohmand sides, respectively, in the recent fighting at Kharga.

Mr. BUCHANAN: In the recent fighting near Kharga the enemy were reported to have lost 140 killed. The numbers of wounded are not known. The losses among the British troops engaged were two Indian soldiers killed and nine wounded.

Mr. MACKARNESS: Were no prisoners taken?

Mr. BUCHANAN: We have no information on that subject.

Mr. MACKARNESS: I beg to give notice that I will repeat the Question on 11th June.

British Indians in the Transvaal.

Sir C. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under-Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been drawn to the recent developments of the Indian situation in the Transvaal, and especially to the British-Indian contention that the Transvaal Government now propose to act contrary to the agreement of January last by enforcing the Registration Law against some 5,000 British Indians entitled to return to the Colony, as a condition of their re-entry; and whether, in view of the dissatisfaction aroused in India by this legislation at the beginning of the year, His Majesty's

Government will make friendly representations in the matter to the Government of the Transvaal.

MR. BUCHANAN: The Secretary of State has no information regarding the alleged proposal of the Transvaal Government, but as was stated by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies yesterday, inquiry is being made of the Governor, and I am not in a position to add anything pending his reply.

The Hague Conference.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can inform the House when Papers relating to the proceedings of the Hague Conference, stated in February to be in course of preparation, will be issued to Parliament.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir EDWARD GREY; Northumberland, Berwick): It is hoped to lay the Papers this week.

Brussels Sugar Convention.

MR. HAROLD COX (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can state what is the difference in economic effect between the original Brussels Sugar Convention, which prohibited the importation of bounty-fed sugar into this country from various foreign countries, and the Protocol arising out of the Additional Act, which prohibits exportation of bounty-fed sugar from these or other countries.

SIR EDWARD GREY: Under the Convention of 1902 no bounty-fed sugar could be imported into this country without the imposition of a countervailing duty. As a result of the terms of the Additional Act, any State not party to this instrument will be at liberty to export to this country any quantity of bounty-fed sugar it pleases. Under the Protocol arising out of the Additional Act the exportation of bounty-fed sugar from Russia is not, as the hon. Member appears to suggest, prohibited, but merely restricted as to the maximum amount to be exported in any one year without return or exemption from excise. For instance, under the original Sugar Convention, as applied by His Majesty's Government, no sugar from Russia could have been imported into this country at all. Under the new arrangements, which I must repeat are not dependent upon the consent of His Majesty's Government and entail no obligation upon us, Russia may in September next send 300,000 tons.

SIR GILBERT PARKER (Gravesend) asked whether other countries besides Russia might send bounty-fed sugar into this country without restriction.

SIR EDWARD GREY said that we were at liberty to accept sugar from any country.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON (Northumberland, Tyneside) asked whether our adhesion to the Convention had not now the effect of endorsing action which would have the result of prohibiting Russia from exporting more than a given amount of sugar to this country.

SIR EDWARD GREY replied in the negative, and was understood to say that, while the Government were cognisant of the arrangement, it could have been made without their consent.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: Is not that a reason for our absolute withdrawal from the Convention?

SIR EDWARD GREY said that our withdrawal from the Convention would not prevent Russia from making this arrangement with other countries. On economic grounds there was no cause to make this particular limitation a reason for separating ourselves from the other Powers.

MR. J. M. ROBERTSON: On what grounds, unless economic, is such a Convention fixed?

SIR EDWARD GREY: On general political considerations.

Case of Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg.

CAPTAIN CRAIG (Down, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is yet in a position to make any statement as to Mr. Nicholas Luxenburg's claim against the Russian Government for his illegal arrest and incarceration at Odessa in March last.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am consulting the Home Office on this case, and shall, if need be, consult the Law Officers. Mr. Luxenburg has suffered owing to his arrest, but before putting forward a claim to compensation it is necessary to be able to base it either upon our own practice as to compensation or upon International Law. As soon as a decision has been come to, I shall be ready to communicate it to the hon. Member.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I will repeat the Question a fortnight hence.

SIR WILLIAM BULL (Hammersmith): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Memorandum as to the reasons for Mr. Luxenburg's arrest by the Russian Government at Odessa in March last has yet been received; and whether a claim for compensation can now be put forward on Mr. Luxenburg's behalf.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I beg to refer the hon. Member to the reply I have just given to the hon. Member for East Down.

British Trade in Morocco.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS (Manchester, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received representations of the injury to British trade in Morocco in consequence of the continued unsettled state of affairs prevailing there; and whether he can take any steps, in concert with France and other interested Powers, to bring these unsatisfactory conditions to an end.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I am aware that trade must suffer by continuance of disturbance in Morocco; but I must refer the hon. Member to Article 2 of the Anglo-French Declaration of 1904, and to the special position of France and Spain in Morocco under the Algeciras Act. The measures now being taken are those considered best adapted to restore order.

Sugar Convention—Additional Act.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR (Liverpool, East Toxteth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is aware that Germany refused to ratify the Additional Act extending the Brussels Sugar Convention for a further period of five years, unless Russia would consent to enter into a protocol, prohibiting her from exporting sugar for six years beyond a certain specified quantity; and if His Majesty's Government were cognisant of this attitude of Germany when they agreed to ratify the Additional Act.

SIR EDWARD GREY: On signing the Additional Act the German Government gave it to be understood that their ratification of the instrument must depend upon the admission of Russia to the Convention upon terms which were acceptable to the great sugar-producing States. At the special meeting of the Commission convened in November last to consider the question of the adhesion of Russia, various methods of compromise were suggested and discussed; and the modification in the system of exportation of Russian sugar eventually decided upon was the only solution on which there was any possibility of an agreement being reached between the various States of the Sugar Union. I would again remind the House that His Majesty's Government do not undertake any obligation in respect of the stipulation tending to the restriction of the exportation of Russian sugar; and, in view of the facts which I have previously given with regard to the export of Russian sugar, it would not have been reasonable, and I consider it would have been inexpedient, for His Majesty's Government to act otherwise than they have done.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR: May I ask if the attitude of Germany in insisting on Russia coming into the Convention on the basis of limiting her exports was not the inevitable result of this country's action?

SIR EDWARD GREY: I do not quite follow the point.

MR. AUSTIN TAYLOR: May I put it in another way?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order. It seems to be an argumentative Question.

Congo—Berlin and Brussels Acts.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can inform the House if the Belgian Government has assented to the publication of the representation made by His Majesty's Government at Brussels on the conditions of Congo annexation in connection with treaty rights and with the Berlin and Brussels Acts; and whether it can be circulated at once.

SIR EDWARD GREY: I have been in communication with the Belgian Government as to publication. They desire that publication should be made simultaneously here and in Belgium, and I expect to lay the Papers on the 15th instant.

MR. KEIR HARDIE (Merthyr Tydvil) was understood to ask if similar representations could not be made with regard to the internal affairs of Russia.

SIR EDWARD GREY replied that in that matter we were under no treaty obligations, and there was no parallel between the two cases.

Shanghai Settlement Boundaries.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any official information with regard to the recent fracas between British municipal police and Chinese police in the Shanghai settlement; and whether, in view of the fact that the development of the district since 1898, when the boundary line on the north of the settlement was last fixed, has now made that line entirely an artificial one and a constant source of friction, he will now press for a re-arrangement of the boundary between Shanghai and the Pao-shan district in the interests of harmonious administration.

SIR EDWARD GREY: We have no information with regard to the incident referred to, which, therefore, was probably not of a grave character. But His Majesty's Minister at Peking will be requested to report the facts and also to furnish his opinion as to the advisability of the course indicated in the second part of the hon. Member's Question.

Case of James Koffie of Elmina.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any Report has yet been received from the Vice-Consul with regard to the case of James Koffie, of Elmina.

SIR EDWARD GREY: His Majesty's Acting Consul at Boma has reported that James Koffie was condemned by the Territorial Tribunal, and not by court-martial, at Lusambo, on 13th July, 1905, to two and a half years penal servitude, and has been released. The Judge, clerk, and interpreter of the Court before which Koffie was tried declare that at no time did he request permission to communicate with the British Consul. The Vice-Governor-General of the Congo State has also informed His Majesty's Acting Consul that Koffie's case was examined by the Court of Appeal, which confirmed the judgment of the lower Tribunal.

The "Knight Commander."

MR. HART-DAVIES (Hackney, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if any further progress has been made in the settlement with the Russian Government in the case of the "Knight Commander."

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Russian Government have declined the proposal of His Majesty's Government that this case should be submitted to arbitration. I am now considering what further step should be taken.

Cuba and the Schooner "Experiment."

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any official information with regard to the killing of a British subject on board the schooner "Experiment" by shots fired from a Cuban revenue cutter; and whether His Majesty's Government has addressed any representations to the Cuban Government on the subject.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The incident was reported by the Acting Governor of the Bahamas. His Majesty's Minister at Havana was instructed to make representations to the Cuban Government. The matter is, however, not yet settled.

The Porte and the Bagdad Railway.

MR. REES (Montgomery Boroughs): To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government has information to the effect that the Porte has pledged, as security for the Government bonds with which payment is to be made for four additional sections of the Bagdad railway, the ceded revenues administered by the Public Debt Commission, which will again come under the control of the Sultan's Government in 1913.

SIR EDWARD GREY: The Answer is in the affirmative.

Parental Responsibilities.

MR. BOTTOMLEY (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that on 28th April last, Frederick Smith, a labourer, of 26, Spencer Road, Stoke Newington, was sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment for non-payment of arrears of 1s. a week which he had been ordered to pay towards the maintenance of his son, Frederick Smith, in the Carlton Reformatory at Bedford; what explanation can be given of the taking of such proceedings in view of the fact that the man was at the time unable to pay such a contribution by reason of ill-health and unemployment; and whether he will take steps to have the order rescinded.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENTT (Mr. GLADSTONE, Leeds, W.): The order to contribute was made on the 27th of September last. As Smith took no notice of the order he was summoned in February, but the case was twice adjourned for a month in order to give an opportunity of paying. As he did not carry out his promises to pay, a commitment was issued on 24th April. Every consideration has been shown to this man, who has made no representations of ill-health, and I am not preppared to take any action in the matter.

Natives at the Franco-British Exhibition.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will cause inquiry to be made in regard to the treatment of the 135 British subjects, natives of Ceylon and India, in the compound at the Franco-British Exhibition; will care be taken that they be furnished with a sufficient supply of suitable food and clothing; and will arrangements be made for them to obtain exercise outside the compound.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have communicated with the authorities at the Exhibition, and I am informed by them that all these natives are brought over under a contract whereby they receive a free journey from India or Ceylon to London, and back at the close of the Exhibition. I have ascertained, further, that they receive good salaries, and are properly housed, clothed, and fed. They can move freely about the Ceylon village and in the Indian arena, and get more exercise than they actually care for. They have, besides, on Sundays the run of the whole Exhibition.

MR. WEIR said that up to Sunday not one single person had been let out of the compound.

MR. GLADSTONE said he had every reason to believe in the accuracy of his information.

MR. WEIR said they had been there several weeks. He further asked the right hon. Gentleman whether the contractor who brought these natives over was a German. Would the right hon. Gentleman accept his statement that they were not properly clothed or fed?

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): Has the right hon. Gentleman seen them? I have, and they are the nearest thing to Adam before the Fall.

[No Answer was returned.]

Workmen's Compensation Act and Cruelty to Children.

SIR F. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the statements in the last Report of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children that many cases of neglect and cruelty to children have arisen from a lump sum having been paid to widows who have thus been tempted into reckless and dissolute courses, breaking up their homes; and whether he will address a circular to County Court Judges urging them to invest such compensation in the way best calculated to secure continuous benefit to the children as well as the widow concerned, and to vary any order or award, under subsection (9) of the First Schedule of The Workmen's Compensation Act, 1906, either at their own discretion or on any reasonable representation made to them by the police, or by any society or otherwise.

MR. GLADSTONE: I have seen the statements in the Report referred to in the Question, and I propose to communicate with the Society with a view to obtaining particulars of the cases on which the statements are based. When this information is obtained, the suggestions made by the hon. Member will be carefully considered. I agree that all possible steps should be taken to protect the compensation paid in these cases, in the interests both of widow and children.

Injury to Atlantic Cables on the Irish Coast.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that during the past few days seven or eight Atlantic cables have been cut or otherwise damaged off the West Coast of Ireland by steam trawlers, causing interference in commercial business between the United Kingdom and the United States and Canada; whether warnings are issued to the proprietors of steam trawlers as to the exact locations of the cables; and, if not, whether he will take this and any other possible measures to safeguard the commercial interests of the community.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): I have received representations from several bankers, brokers, merchants, and shipowners, to the effect that there has been damage to submarine cables off the West Coast of Ireland, and my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informs me that he has received a similar representation from the American Ambassador. I understand that the subject has also been brought before the notice of my right hon. friend the Postmaster-General by the companies concerned, and the question has been raised at the International Telegraph Conference now sitting. I cannot say whether this damage, which took place some fifty miles from the Coast, has been caused by the operations of steam trawlers, but I am making inquiries, and am considering in consultation with my right hon. friend the Postmaster-General whether any steps can be taken under the International Telegraph Convention and the Submarine Telegraph Act, or otherwise, for the protection of the cables, assuming the trawlers to be in fault. I understand that one of the companies concerned has recently substituted a stronger type of cable in the area affected, with good results. There are very often obvious objections to showing the routes of these cables on the Admiralty charts, but His Majesty's Government will take whatever steps may be possible to safeguard the commercial interests of the community in regard to this matter.

Dismissal of Railway Employees.

MR. BELL (Derby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is not incumbent on the Board of Trade to protect men from arbitary dismissals by railway companies, chiefly on account of the positions they hold, who have been elected by their fellow-workmen to represent their grievances to the directors or on the Conciliation Boards under the agreement arrived at on the termination of the railway men's agitation on 6th November last year; whether his attention has been called to a number of men who have been recently dismissed under those circumstances by the Midland Railway Company, and whether he will hold an inquiry into the causes of such dismissals at which the men shall have opportunities of meeting the company's officials to prove their cases.

Mr. CHURCHILL: With regard to the particular instances of dismissal of men on the Midland Railway, I may remind my hon. friend that in two of these, to which he drew my attention by the Question which he asked on the 28th ultimo, an explanation has already been furnished by the railway company. In the first case (that of W. Charter) they state that the dismissal was, with others, rendered necessary solely by declining traffics and bad trade outlook, and the notice was issued to him before he had taken the action for which he is alleged to have been dismissed. In the second case in which it was represented that an employee elected to a conciliation board (W. Carter) has been suspended, the company declare that their decision in the matter was taken in the interests of discipline. I understand that it is suggested that three other men, whose names have been sent to me by my hon. friend have been dismissed by the Midland Railway Company because of their connection with movements for improved conditions of service, and I am communicating with the company with regard to their cases, and will also forward to the railway company any observations or criticisms which my hon. friend may desire to make on the facts as stated by them in regard to these, or the two cases I have first mentioned. Speaking generally, however, the Board of Trade cannot undertake to secure the immunity from dismissal upon ordinary grounds of railway employees elected on to the conciliation boards or prominent in connection with the working of the conciliation scheme settled in November last. If I were led to believe that men were being systematically or deliberately dismissed or reduced on account of their position as representatives of the employees, I should be bound to take such action as may be open to me to protect the character of the conciliation boards. So serious a charge could not, however, be preferred without direct and extensive evidence. The general manager of the Midland Railway emphatically repudiates any suggestion of the kind. I will continue to watch carefully the general process of setting up the new conciliation boards, and will inquire specifically into any personal cases which my hon. friend may bring to my notice, but I have no statutory power to enforce such an inquiry as he is asking for, nor do I feel that I could usefully make a friendly proposal for one at the present juncture.

Mr. BELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a member of another board of the Midland Railway has been discharged to-day for taking the chair at a meeting on Sunday last; that the reply given by the general manager in regard to the man Charter is inaccurate and not fully stated; and for those reasons is the right hon. Gentleman now prepared to hold an inquiry before which the men may have an opportunity of stating their case?

Mr. CHURCHILL: If my hon. friend will put me in possession of any further facts I will give the matter immediate attention, but at present I do not see that I can add anything to the statement I have made.

Mr. BELL: Is it not possible for the right hon. Gentleman to invite the general manager and an official, whose name I will give him, to attend at his office and at the same time give the men an opportunity of facing those officials?

Mr. CHURCHILL: It is possible for me to invite the representatives of either party to the Board of Trade, but it is not possible for me to ask them to meet unless both parties are agreeable. That I cannot do.

Mr. BELL: This is a very serious matter. We have to choose between this and perhaps a general strike, and the result of the last agitation was to avoid a strike. May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he will invite the general manager of the Midland Railway Company to appear at his office and also the officials whose names I will give him and give them the opportunity of declining to come? I will also give him the names of the men who ought also to be invited.

Mr. CHURCHILL: I am quite certain that if I were to invite any of these officials to come to the Board of Trade at present they would come, of course, as a matter of courtesy. But I should not like to issue such an invitation as the result of a pledge given in the House of Commons. That would add compulsion to what must necessarily be a voluntary operation. I am quite ready to consider very carefully what immediate steps should be taken in regard to a matter which I thoroughly agree is a question of high public importance.

Stornoway Mail Service.

MR. WEIR (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Postmaster-General, having regard to the fact that there has been an increase of more than 100 per cent. in the correspondence and parcels dealt with at the Stornoway post office during the space of ten years succeeding the introduction of the Jubilee postal reforms, can he see his way to place a faster and better steamer on the Stornoway service.

THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I carefully considered the question, but I regret that I find the increase in the cost of the postal service in the Stornoway district during the last ten years has been even greater than the increase in the revenue, and as the service is at present maintained at a heavy loss to the Post Office, I should not be justified in incurring additional expense to secure the employment of a faster steamer.

Education and Pauperism.

MAJOR COATES: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if, in the Education Bill, he would provide for the abolishing of Section 40 of the Elementary Education Act, 1876, and thus release the taint of pauperism on the children of those receiving outdoor relief, and also relieve the boards of guardians of requiring, as a condition of relief, that the children shall attend school.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Mr. RUNCIMAN, Dewsbury): I beg to refer the hon. and gallant Member to the reply which I gave on this subject on 11th May, of which I will send him a copy.

Salterhebble (Halifax) School.

MR. BRIDGEMAN (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he is aware that All Saints' School, Salterhebble, Halifax, has been rebuilt at the expense of the parents and foundation managers without any cost to the rates; and if he will consider the desirability of restoring the school to the list of grant-earning schools.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I am informed that the school has been rebuilt. Before any application for its recognition as a public elementary school can be entertained the requirements of Section 8 of the Education Act, 1902, must be complied with.

Underfed Gateshead Schools Children.

MR. J. JOHNSON (Gateshead): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Education if he is aware of the number of underfed children attending the elementary schools in Gateshead; is he aware that the council refuse to adopt the Act passed to benefit such children; and if he intends to issue any orders or instructions regarding the powers vested in councils to relieve underfed children.

MR. RUNCIMAN: I have no information as to the number of underfed children in Gateshead. I have no power to compel local education authorities to put the Provision of Meals Act into force, but shortly after the Act was passed the Board issued a Circular to all local authorities calling attention to their powers under the Act and to the advantages which might be obtained by exercising them.

Government and Furnishing Contracts.

MR. JOYNSON-HICKS: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether only Metropolitan firms are allowed to tender for contracts for joinery, furnishing, and decorative work in connection with Government buildings in London; and, if so, whether this rule has been adopted because of the alleged difficulty of inspection during the manufacture where this is carried on outside the London area; and whether he will give instructions that in future Government contracts shall in all cases be open equally to all manufacturers in the United Kingdom.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. HARCOURT, Lancashire, Rossendale): The limitation of competition to firms in the Metropolitan area applies only to articles of joinery and upholstery which are supplied for Government Offices in London and which have to be inspected while in course of construction. Inspection is necessary to ensure good workmanship and the use of good materials, and to prevent sweating. I am not prepared to throw such contracts open to all manufacturers as it would necessitate the employment of a largely increased staff of inspectors, and would probably lead to financial loss and delays. The list of Metropolitan manufacturers is a large one and affords ample scope for competition.

Commissioners of Inland Revenue and the Death Duties.

MR. BOULTON (Huntingdonshire, Ramsey): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if his attention has been called to the fact that the Paper issued by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue setting forth the practice of the Department in dealing for Death Duty purposes with the various interests connected with the sale of intoxicating liquors and ordered by the House of Commons to be printed on 14th May, 1890, has been reprinted by the King's printers this year, with the words upon it, Reprinted, 1908; and if he will inform the House by whose instructions and at whose request this Paper was reprinted.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.): H.C. Paper No. 176 of 1890, Inland Revenue (Death Duties), Public Houses, was reprinted by H.M. Stationery Office, in the ordinary course for sale to the public, in order to meet the heavy demand for the Paper.

MR. BOULTON: Has this Paper been superseded by a later Paper, and, if so, will the later one be circulated?

MR. HOBHOUSE: I am not aware, but I will make inquiries.

Customs and Excise Changes.

MR. SNOWDEN (Blackburn): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware of the uneasiness throughout the Excise service at the changes contemplated in the way of transferring the establishment licences to the local authorities and the Excise work to the Customs; and can he assure the Excise officers that their interests will be properly safeguarded and that they will not suffer financially nor so far as regards their present prospects of promotion.

MR. HOBHOUSE: Until the changes referred to have actually taken place, it is not possible to forecast the future needs of the public service. I may, however, take this opportunity of stating that I shall be prepared before the end of the present financial year to consider favourably a recommendation from the Board of Inland Revenue to award gratuities to those Excise officers who may be called on to undertake the new work this autumn in connection with old-age pensions.

Pollution of the Trent.

MR. RAPHAEL (Derbyshire, S.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, if he is aware that there is a large amount of sewage pollution within the area of the Trent Fishery Board, and if he will take such steps as may be necessary to enforce upon the Board the due performance of its duties; and if he will give particulars of the annual income and expenditure of the Board, particularly with regard to the proportion of income expended in salaries and in prevention of the pollution of the river.

THE TREASURER OF THE HOUSEHOLD (Sir EDWARD STRACHEY, Somersetshire, S.): We are aware that there is a large amount of sewage pollution within the area of the Trent Fishery Board. There is no statutory compulsion cast upon Fishery Boards to prosecute in cases of pollution, but the Board in question has been very active within its limits in dealing with the matter. Their Report for 1907, which I will send my hon. friend, gives the financial particulars desired.

Small Holdings.

SIR F. CHANNING: I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether the Board have already taken steps, under Section 16 of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1907, to acquire land by agreement or to exercise any of the other powers conferred by the Act on county councils, with a view to demonstrating the feasibility of the establishment of small holdings in any locality; and, if so, in what counties and in what districts; whether the Board have in contemplation any schemes for utilising their powers under Section 16 of the Act; and whether the Board will consider the advisability of selecting two or three suitable areas in the country wherein to establish groups of small holdings to demonstrate the profitable working of the special branches of small farming which are most likely to succeed in those areas, and to encourage the development and equipment of such groups of small holdings by co-operative societies under the provisions of Section 39 of the Act.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: In view of the number of small holdings that will be established all over the country by county councils, the Board have not thought it necessary to take any action in the direction mentioned, but if they decide to do so they will bear in mind the suggestion made by my hon. friend in the latter part of his Question.

SIR F. CHANNING: Will the Board take an early opportunity of considering the latter part of the Question, having regard to the season during which agricultural operations can be carried out?

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The Board will bear that in mind.

SIR F. CHANNING: I will draw attention to this question on the Estimates.

Down Survey.

MR. HAYDEN (Roscommon, S.): I beg to ask the hon. Member for South Somerset, as representing the President of the Board of Agriculture, whether, seeing that the book of surveys and distributions at present in the Record Office, Dublin, are the abstracts of the Civil Survey of 1640 and the Down Survey of 1654–6, and therefore the counterpart of the Down Survey maps which have just been issued by the Ordnance Survey, Ireland, the Government will see its way to publish, as a State Paper, the book of surveys and distributions.

SIR EDWARD STRACHEY: The abstracts of the surveys and distributions of the Civil and Down Surveys are contained in twenty large volumes, of 400 pages each. The books show the lands distributed and the names of the persons to whom the lands were granted; the whole work is in ordinary manuscript and there are no maps or sketches attached. It is not proposed to publish them in the manner suggested.

Scottish Government Reports.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether he can say when the Annual Reports of the Local Government Board (Scotland), the Congested Districts Board (Scotland), and the Fishery Board (Scotland) for 1907 will be issued; and if he will see that they are in the hands of Members before the Scottish Estimates are taken.

THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SINCLAIR, Forfarshire): I am taking steps to ensure that the Reports in question shall be in the hands of Members at an early date and in any case before the Estimates are taken.

Protection of Scottish Fisheries.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether any steps have yet been taken to place a new Fishery Board cruiser at the disposal of the Fishery Board for Scotland, for the protection of the line-fishing industry against the depredations of illegal trawling.

MR. SINCLAIR: I am not in a position to add anything to my reply to my hon. friend on 2nd April last.

Lewis Cottars.

MR. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland, in view of the promise set forth in the Scottish Office letter of 15th February, 1904, to the Lewis local committee, will he state whether the Congested Districts Board have yet been able to arrange a scheme under which Lewis cottars may voluntarily migrate to the mainland.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The Congested Districts Board is in correspondence with the Landward Committee of the Stornoway Parish Council in order to ascertain whether any and, if so, what Lewis cottars are able and desirous to migrate to the mainland. When that information is forthcoming, the matter will be further considered.

Mr. WEIR: And while the matter is under consideration these people are starving.

Island of Lewis Road Schemes.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland whether the Congested Districts Board can now see their way to provide a grant for the construction of a road between Tolsta and Ness, Island of Lewis, as urged in a resolution passed at a meeting at Ness early in the year, representing 4,000 inhabitants of the Ness district.

Mr. SINCLAIR: The Answer is in the negative. The Board do not see their way to make a grant in respect of this road; but they have resolved to offer grants on the usual conditions in respect of two other roads in Lewis, the construction of which has been pressed upon them, and is considered more urgent.

Morrich Mhor Grazing Rights.

Mr. WEIR: I beg to ask the Secretary for Scotland if he will state in how many instances the Tain Borough Council have effected arrangements with persons who claim grazing rights over Morrich Mhor; and, in view of the fact that the crofters and fishermen inhabitants of the village of Inver have possessed grazing rights over the Mhor for generations, will he take such action as may be necessary to prevent these rights being infringed.

Mr. SINCLAIR: This is a matter over which, as I have already informed my hon. friend, I have no jurisdiction. I learn however, on inquiry, that the burgh town council have come to an arrangement with the tenants surrounding the burgh's portion of the lands in question. The lands referred to in the second portion of the Question are not now within the control of the town council.

Mr. WEIR: With how many has an arrangement been come to?

Mr. SINCLAIR: I think three.

Mr. WEIR: Three; and three only.

The Dublin Crown Jewels.

Mr. BOTTOMLEY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in connection with the disappearance of the Dublin Crown jewels, the Dublin Herald and Athlone Pursuivant were called upon to resign; and, if so, why.

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. Birrell, Bristol, N.): Towards the end of last October it was decided, with the approval of the Crown, that the Office of Arms, Dublin Castle, must be reconstituted. This involved the retirement of Athlone Pursuivant and Dublin Herald, who were notified to that effect, and who resigned office accordingly.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): Have the offices been abolished?

Mr. BIRRELL: Yes. At all events they have not been filled up. I do not know that they have been abolished.

Mr. JOHN REDMOND: What is the meaning of the right hon. Gentleman in saying it involved reconstruction if he does not mean the abolition of those offices?

Mr. BIRRELL: I said it involved reconstitution, and liberty was taken to abolish the offices if necessary.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: May I ask at about what date these two gentlemen resigned?

Mr. BIRRELL: I must have notice of that Question.

Maynooth.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether any arrangements have been made or negotiations entered into with a view to creating Maynooth a constituent college of the new Dublin University, or for the affiliation of Maynooth with it.

MR. BIRRELL: The Answer is in the negative.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: Will the right hon. Gentleman take steps to prevent the inclusion of Maynooth College under his scheme?

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Could not this Question be asked and answered in the Standing Committee upstairs where it was discussed for many hours of the day?

MR. BIRRELL: Yes.

CAPTAIN CRAIG: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman to answer my Question?

MR. BIRRELL: I will answer the Question upstairs.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER, subsequently referring to this reply, appealed to the Speaker to decide whether it was for a Minister to say that a Question which could be answered in Committee upstairs need not be answered in the House. He pointed out that four-fifths of the Members of the House were not members of the Committee, and asked for a ruling from the Chair as to whether the course which had been taken would be held to constitute a precedent.

MR. SPEAKER: The Answer to the Question was given in the negative. The hon. and gallant Member asked a further Question which the right hon. Gentleman said he would be glad to discuss upstairs.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Is it an obligation on any Minister to answer any Question if he regards it as vexatious or frivolous?

MR. SPEAKER: There is no method of compelling him.

The Irish Lord-Lieutenancy.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether, during the absence of the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Lords Justices are appointed for the government of the country while the Lord-Lieutenant is out of the Kingdom of Ireland, and are duly sworn into office for that purpose, and that a Roman Catholic is ineligible for the position of a Lord Justice; and, having regard to the fact that in the absence of the Sovereign from the realm no appointment of Lords Justices has for a considerable time taken place, on what ground is the appointment of Lords Justices for the government of Ireland during the absence from that country of the Lord-Lieutenant regarded as necessary, more especially as from those appointments persons holding the faith of the great majority of the people of Ireland are excluded.

MR. BIRRELL: The fact is as stated in the first part of the Question. The practice of appointing one or more Lords Justices for the government of Ireland during the absence of the Lord-Lieutenant is of ancient origin, dating back, as it does, to the fourteenth century at least. If Lords Justices were not so appointed there would be no one in Ireland possessing the power to exercise the prerogative of mercy in criminal cases or to perform other important official acts which do not admit of delay.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL asked if the right hon. Gentleman was aware that the Lord-Lieutenant could not go as far as Holyhead without a ceremony which involved a slight upon the Catholic population, whereas the King could go wherever he liked without the appointment of Lords Justices.

MR. BIRRELL: Well, I am not responsible for that.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Cannot my right hon. friend abolish this absurd gingerbread practice?

[No Answer was returned.]

De Montalt Estate, Dundrum.

Mr. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state upon what grounds the Estates Commissioners are giving portions of the untenanted lands of the De Montalt estate, Dundrum, County Tipperary, to the sons of farmers who already occupy farms of 60 and 70 acres each, whilst excluding those whose holdings are uneconomic, being valued at about £5 and under; and can he say under what section of the Act of 1903 have portions of the De Montalt estate been given to the Rev. Mr. De Boe and to Messrs. Fraser, Scott, Hadnett, and Hickey.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Estates Commissioners inform me that this estate was on resale divided into 100 parcels which were allotted to 100 different persons. Seven parcels only were allotted to the sons of tenants who occupy 60 acres or upwards. These sons of tenants were eligible to receive parcels under Section 2 (1) (*a*) of the Act; and in the Commissioners' opinion they were fit and proper persons to be allotted parcels. In distributing the land, the Commissioners have acted to the best of their judgment and in the exercise of the discretion vested in them by Parliament. The Rev. Mr. Du Boe and Messrs. Fraser and Scott are being made tenants to the Commissioners, with the view to subsequent sale to them. It has been judicially decided that the Commissioners have power to make lettings. Mr. Hadnett is eligible under Section 2 (1), both as a tenant and the son of a tenant, and Mr. Hickey is also eligible as the son of a tenant.

Rathkeale School.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland have agreed to contribute two-thirds of the cost of a new school-house for the boys at Rathkeale, or two-thirds of the cost of repair of the old building, on condition that the school be vested in trustees; whether he is also aware that the manager signified his willingness to vest the school-house in trustees, provided the Commissioners advanced the total sum required; and whether, having regard to the fact that the present building cost some £800, all of which was provided locally, and also to the fact that the Commissioners are willing to advance probably £700, the two-thirds cost of the new building, conditionally, he will point out to them the reasonableness of the demand for the full cost of repair, having regard as well to the saving which would be effected by this course.

Mr. BIRRELL: The Commissioners of National Education inform me that it is not the case that they have agreed to contribute two-thirds of the cost either of a new school-house or of improving the existing building. They cannot agree to make such contribution until the manager is in a position to comply with the necessary conditions. It is the case that the manager has signified his willingness to vest the existing school-house in trustees upon condition that the Commissioners advance the total sum required, but the Commissioners have no power, under the approved regulations, to regard the existing fabric of a school-house as constituting any part of the local aid necessary to warrant a grant for improving the premises.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: What are the conditions imposed by the Commissioners before they make an advance?

*Mr. BIRRELL: They require a contribution from the management of the school of one-third of the cost of building or repair, and they then contribute two-thirds.

Mr. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Having regard to the fact that the locality subscribed £800 towards the cost of the old building will the right hon. Gentleman point out to the Commissioners the reasonableness of the demand for the full cost of repair in this case?

Mr. BIRRELL: I will look into the matter.

International Prize Court of Appeal.

*Sir CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether His Majesty's

Government continue to have the intention as to preliminary legislation before ratification of an agreement to establish an International Prize Court of Appeal stated by the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): The views of the Government have undergone no change, and the Answer returned by my predecessor in office to the hon. Member for the Norwood division of Lambeth, on 4th February last, still holds good.

Cancer Research.

*CAPTAIN FABER (Hampshire, Andover): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, with reference to the meeting held in Berlin on 23rd May with the object of founding an international association for the prosecution of cancer research, he will promise the assistance of this country in that direction.

MR. ASQUITH: No, Sir; as at present advised I am not disposed to give such a promise as the hon. Member suggests. The Imperial Cancer Research Fund, which is supported by Government, is doing all it can in the encouragement of individual intercourse and exchange of material between investigators of different countries.

MR. ARTHUR LEE: Is this Government support financial or moral?

MR. ASQUITH asked for notice of the Question.

Education Bill.

MR. TALBOT (Oxford University): I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether it is his intention to proceed with the Committee stage of the Elementary Education Bill before the House adjourns at the end of July.

MR. ASQUITH: I am not at present in a position to make any statement.

The House and the Lord Chancellor.

MR. HENRY (Shropshire, Wellington): I beg to ask the Prime Minister if he will give an opportunity of discussing Civil Service Estimate, Class 2, Vote 1, Subhead A. (Department of the Lord Chancellor).

MR. ASQUITH: The Vote in question provides only for such portion of the Lord Chancellor's salary as is paid to him in respect of his duties as Speaker of the House of Lords, and whilst what I am about to say is a matter for the decision of the Chair, I do not understand that it would be possible on that Vote to raise any question affecting the discharge of the Lord Chancellor's functions in any other capacity than in his position as Speaker of the House of Lords.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL asked whether any Minister in this House could be responsible for and answer Questions on behalf of the Lord Chancellor in respect of departmental and administrative as distinguished from his Lordship's judicial functions.

MR. ASQUITH replied that he thought he was responsible.

The Appointment of Magistrates.

MR. HENRY: I beg to ask the Prime Minister whether, in consideration of the dissatisfaction that is prevailing as regards the present system pursued in connection with magisterial appointments, he will appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the present conditions of the borough and county benches, and, if considered desirable, to make recommendations as regards an alteration in the manner magistrates are selected.

MR. ASQUITH: I do not think that a Select Committee would be an appropriate instrument for inquiry, if inquiry were needed. But I shall be glad to receive and consider any suggestions which my hon. friend or others may make in regard to the method of selection.

MR. MORTON (Sutherland): Will my right hon. friend take means to see that all classes are properly represented on the county benches?

MR. ASQUITH;: As my hon. friend knows, it does not directly fall within my Department; but I am sure my noble friend the Lord Chancellor has that object in view.

Mr. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman see that the Lord Chancellor does his duty in this respect?

[No Answer was returned.]

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London) asked as to the arrangements for Thursday.

Mr. ASQUITH said that from inquiries he had made, he believed it to be possible, while maintaining the character of Thursday as a day of Supply, for the House to meet at twelve on that day. The Foreign Office Vote would be put down. He imagined that it would be for the general convenience of the House that the consideration of that Vote should be concluded at an early hour. A further opportunity would be given for a general discussion on the Foreign Office Vote.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: Will Questions be taken on Thursday? Of course that is an inconvenience to Ministers.

Mr. ASQUITH: I will consider that.

Mr. SWIFT MACNEILL: I will put them down on chance.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: In order that there may be no misunderstanding, may we take it the debate on the Foreign Office Vote will not be concluded on Thursday, and that there will be another opportunity for discussing it?

Mr. ASQUITH was understood to assent to that.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir William Brampton Gurdon reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added to Standing Committee A the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Coroners (Ireland) and the Local Registration of Title (Ireland) Amendment Bills): Mr. Ffrench, Mr. Clancy, Marquess of Hamilton, Mr. James O'Connor, Mr. Gordon, Mr. Lardner, Mr. Kettle, Mr. Moore, Mr. Muldoon, Mr. Long, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. Fetherstonhaugh, Mr. Newnes, Mr. Robert Harcourt, and Mr. King.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had added to Standing Committee A the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Public Rights of Way Bill): Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, Mr. Walker, Mr. Cheetham, Mr. Winfrey, Mr. Hyam, Mr. Arnold Herbert, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. Dundas White, Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Byles, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. Meysey-Thompson, Mr. Cross, Mr. Younger, and Mr. McArthur.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had added to Standing Committee A the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Municipal Elections Bill): Major Coates, Mr. Younger, Mr. Mitchell-Thomson, Mr. Burdett-Coutts, Mr. Cleland, Mr. McCrae, Mr. Adkins, Mr. Barnes, Mr. Mooney, Mr. Thomasson, Mr. Collins, Mr. Arthur Priestley, Mr. Wadsworth, Mr. Morton, and Mr. Brotherton.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B: Dr. Macnamara; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Masterman.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had added to Standing Committee B the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Mr. John Taylor, Mr. Vivian, Mr. Hills, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Abel Smith, Viscount Morpeth, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, Sir John Dickson-Poynder, Mr. Ryland Adkins, Mr. Bateman Hope, Mr. Alden, Mr. Barran, Mr. Montagu, Sir John Dewar, and Mr. Morrell.

Sir William Brampton Gurdon further reported from the Committee; That they had discharged the following Member from Standing Committee B (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Mr. Charles Craig; and had appointed in substitution (in respect of the Housing, Town Planning, etc., Bill): Mr. Harmood-Banner.

Sir WILLIAM BRAMPTON GURDON further reported from the Committee; That they had added to Standing Committee C the following Fifteen Members (in respect of the Post Office Savings Bank Bill): Mr. Wardle, Mr. O'Malley, Mr. Patrick White, Mr. John Ward, Mr. Claude Hay, Sir Henry Seymour King, Mr. Watson Rutherford, Mr. Starkey, Mr. Harold Cox, Mr. Agnew, Sir Edward Tennant, Mr. Armitage, Mr. T. R. Bethell, Major Dunne, and Mr. Mackarness.

Reports to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILL.

PUBLIC-HOUSES (EXTENSION OF FACILITIES).

MR. WILLIAM RUTHERFORD (Liverpool, West Derby), in asking leave to introduce a Bill to facilitate the provision of accommodation for supplying food and of other improvements in connection with premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors by retail, said it was a short and non-controversial Bill. The facilities referred to were five in number—first, the provision of accommodation for the supply of tea, coffee, cocoa, or food in licensed houses; secondly, the making of such premises more open, airy, well-ventilated, or clean; thirdly, the improvement or enlargement of the sanitary accommodation; fourthly, the substitution of the provision of chairs and tables, either wholly or partly, in lieu of existing bar accommodation; and fifthly, the provision of games, newspapers, music or gardens, or any other means of reasonable recreation. It was a temperance Bill, and the idea was that it should make for temperance and for sobriety. He believed it was generally admitted that the conduct of individuals was very largely influenced by their environment. There were many publicans and holders of licences who were sincerely desirous of making their premises more decent and cleaner, of supplying food and non-alcoholic refreshment, and of substituting chairs and tables for mere bars, but the accommodation was so limited, and the restrictions imposed by the magistrates and the Legislature so difficult to get over, that they were prevented from making their licensed houses so comfortable, so respectable, and so commodious as they wished. This was not a party Bill, and it was in no sense controversial. There were, he knew, some persons who would rather end public-houses, but his suggestion was that they should make the public-house brighter, and as it was inevitable that no matter how many public-houses were reduced some would remain, he gathered that even those who would end a portion of the public-houses would be with him in allowing the Bill to be read a first time. In France and Belgium and other Continental countries there were no restrictions which prevented that class of trader from enlarging and making his premises structurally convenient. He had the same facilities as other classes of traders, and what was the result? In France the convictions for drunkenness last year were only 623, of which 207 alone were in Paris, and if they compared that with the 197,000 convictions for drunkenness in England and Wales it showed that the removal of restrictions which made drinking secret and carried on in ill-regulated places, and gave proper facilities for reasonable refreshment in decent places, would do a great deal to get rid of the drunkenness and insobriety from which this country at present suffered. It was for those reasons he asked the House to allow him to introduce the Bill.

Motion made, and Question, "That leave be given to bring in a Bill to facilitate the provision of accommodation for supplying food, and of other improvements in connection with premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors by retail,"—(*Mr. William Rutherford,*)—put and agreed to.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Watson Rutherford, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, Lord Robert Cecil, Mr. James Mason, Mr. Barnard, Mr. Gretton, Colonel Hall Walker, Mr. Goulding, Sir Henry Kimber, Earl of Ronaldshay, and Mr. John Rutherford.

PUBLIC-HOUSES (EXTENSION OF FACILITIES) BILL.

"To facilitate the provision of accommodation for supplying food, and of other improvements in connection with premises licensed for the sale of intoxicating liquors by retail," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 16th June, and to be printed. [Bill 257.]

FINANCE BILL.

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Amendment to Question [1st June], "That the Bill be now read a second time. Which Amendment was:—

> "To leave out from the word 'That' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words 'in view of the growing liabilities of the nation for naval and military defence, old-age pensions, and education, and of the necessity for giving additional relief to ratepayers from the increasing charge for national services now thrown upon the rates, this House regrets that no attempt is made to increase the resources of the Exchequer by broadening the basis of taxation,"—(*Mr. Laurence Hardy*,)—instead thereof.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

MR. BONAR LAW (Camberwell, Dulwich) said the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the beginning of his speech last night complained that his hon. friends on that side of the House had dealt with everything except the Finance Bill, but it seemed to him that the rebuke he had directed might with some force be applied to the right hon. Gentleman himself, and what he (Mr. Law) proposed to do was to follow the precept and not the example of the right hon. Gentleman. He remembered hearing a statement by some member of the Government that they were blessed with a new kind of Parliament, and they were therefore entitled to make precedents. They were doing so, and among these precedents there was none that marked more distinctly an entirely new departure than the Budget which they were discussing. The Postmaster-General had told them quite truly on the previous day that this Budget was remarkable for three things. It was remarkable for the scheme of old-age pensions; it was remarkable also, though in a lesser degree, for the diminution of the sugar duty; but it was remarkable most of all for the fact, to which the right hon. Gentleman did not refer, that for the first time, he ventured to say, in their history the Government of the day by means of the Budget had imposed upon the country obligations, undefined but very definite, without having the courage at the same time to face the problem as to the means by which those obligations were to be met. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had challenged them to oppose old-age pensions or the reduction of the sugar duty. Both of these things were popular, he admitted, but he did not see how it was possible for anyone to defend the great increase of obligations involved in the one and the great loss of revenue involved in the other, and certainly so far no serious attempt had been made to make that defence. He asked the House to consider exactly what the financial position of the country was. The Chancellor of the Exchequer at this time next year, whoever he might be, would be faced in consequence of the proposals of this Budget by a deficit due to old age pensions alone which was estimated by the Prime Minister at about five millions, which had already grown in the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to six millions, and which he expected would reach a much larger sum before they had done. But that deficit was based upon the assumption that the existing duties would yield at least the same revenue which they were expected to yield this year, and they could not do so. This year they obtained for a small portion of the year a part of the full sugar duty; that represented something like £400,000, and obviously it must disappear next year. In making his estimate this year the Prime Minister anticipated an increase in the income-tax for the reason that last year was a prosperous year, and that there would therefore be more income-tax yielded. That could not apply next year, because everyone admitted that next year they would have to deal with a year which had not been prosperous from that point of view. He thought he was not exaggerating when he said that the diminution of revenue from those two causes alone would amount to about a million sterling. For old-age pensions alone the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have to find a sum of seven millions sterling, and it seemed to him that to impose those obligations upon the country without at the same time facing the liability involved was a kind of finance which it was absolutely impossible to defend. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had made an attempt to defend it. He had told them that it would be quite unprecedented and improper for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to budget beyond the year with which he was dealing. It was obvious that that was purely a technical defence, and that it did not touch the real problem, but even as a technical defence it broke down absolutely in the light of the action of the Government. Last year the Prime Minister, who was then Chancellor of the Exchequer, actually provided in advance for a problematical charge on account of old-age pensions, and now the curious argument used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was that it was quite right and proper to provide for a charge which was not certain and only problematical, but the moment that obligation became irrevocable then it was improper for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to make provision for it. It would be quite impossible to find any words which would condemn the whole Budget so strongly as those used in condemnation of it in advance by the Prime Minister last year. He told them then that it was his duty to budget for the future. The exact words used by the Prime Minister were important, not merely because of the unequivocal condemnation which they gave to this Budget but for the soundness of the principles they contained. He said—

> "The country has reached a stage in which, whether we look merely at its fiscal or its social exigencies, we cannot afford to drift along the stream and treat each year's finance as if it were self-contained."

Well, he was not content with drifting along the stream, for now he plunged over the cataract, and the only defence which the Chancellor of the Exchequer could give was to deny the principle laid down by the Prime Minister last year and to say that it was his duty to treat each year's finance as if it were self-contained. But the Prime Minister went even farther in direct condemnation of the course which he had taken this year. Speaking, he thought, in regard to the sugar duty, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "I cannot deal with the surplus in such a way as to involve any permanent diminution of revenue."

But even that was not enough. Some hon. friend taunted the right hon. Gentleman that in that case they could look for no remission of any kind of taxation, but the right hon. Gentleman would not have that, and this was how he explained it—

> "I am budgeting"—

he said—

> "for the next two or three years, and it is in face of that situation that what I said applies."

He told them therefore last year that for the next two or three years, *i.e.*, the time for which he expected to be responsible for the finances, he could look forward to no diminution in revenue. What was the explanation? It was a curious change of front, and no explanation had been given so far. He hoped the Prime Minister would give some explanation, but if he did not, he did not think they would have much difficulty in guessing at the real cause. There was a great change in the political situation. Last year the tenure of office of the Government seemed still secure. The Prime Minister then could employ his whole energy in trying to produce a sound Budget. The position was not now quite so secure, and the Prime Minister seemed to be much more exercised in producing not a sound but a popular Budget. That change was one which he thought was a characteristic of the Government and of the Liberal Party all along the line. When they came into office three years ago they were very ambitious, and they spoke really as if their accession to power meant the dawn of a better day. They were not so ambitious now; they were still not without ambition, but it was a more modest ambition. It hardly extended beyond the intention expressed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the President of the Board of Trade, the intention to remain two or three more years in office. That was a modest ambition. He saw no reason why it should not be realised. Indeed, he thought the position outside had strengthened the Leader of the House within the House itself. He noticed two or three weeks ago a picture which represented the Prime Minister as a lion tamer, a picture very flattering to him but not so flattering to the lion. In that picture the right hon. Gentleman held a whip. It would have been complete if it had been labelled "Bye-election," for that was the scourge by which he kept his unruly followers in order. The obligation imposed by old-age pensions, great as it was, was not the only nor perhaps the greatest obligation which would have to be faced immediately by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. His hon. friends who moved and seconded the Amendment had pointed out the obligation in connection with the relief of local taxation; and that was admitted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself. It must be faced some time, though it was not an immediate obligation. There was also a demand, not for education, but in the name of education, for some money to be supplied by the Treasury. How much that would be, he did not profess to know. If they could judge the intentions of the Government by their Bill they would know, but in this instance the Bill was no guide to the intentions of the Government. But apart from these indefinite obligations there was an obligation which was quite as definite in his opinion as that of old-age pensions itself. The Prime Minister had quite recently given the House a clear and unequivocal pledge that if the German naval programme which started this year looked next year like being continued we should have a building programme as well. Not one of the German naval programmes in recent years had been abandoned or postponed; several of them had been anticipated, and therefore it was practically certain that that was an obligation which this country would have to face next year. And yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer chose this time to make a speech in which he actually held out to the country the hope of a reduction in our naval expenditure—a time, moreover, when it had been admitted by the Prime Minister and some other members of the Government that if the German naval programme was carried out, and if we had no shipbuilding programme in consequence of it, the German navy, in the biggest size of battleships, would in only three years be actually stronger than ours. The right hon. Gentleman had chosen that time to represent to the House and to the country that it was we who were responsible for the growth of armaments. If that speech really represented the view of the Government, then the security of the country was in the gravest danger. If, on the other hand, the Prime Minister's views represented the feeling of the Government, then for the Chancellor of the Exchequer to court the applause of his followers below the gangway by holding out hopes of reduction which were impossible of fulfilment was a course not worthy of the right hon. Gentleman. With all these obligations in front of them, the Government elected to take off the sugar duty. He was not going to say anything in detail in regard to that duty, but he was bound to point out that its evil effects had been greatly exaggerated. It had been suggested, for instance, that because sugar was the raw material of some industries the duty was therefore specially obnoxious. Why was it obnoxious on that account? Our manufacturers were not handicapped in any way by the duty as against their foreign rivals in the home market, and foreign manufacturers had to pay the full equivalent on the goods they sent in. Since the Government came into office the price of sugar had not been high, and therefore no one could pretend that that duty was an intolerable burden or one which it was necessary, in all the circumstances, to remove. But whether or not it ought to be removed depended really on what was the substitute which was proposed for it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had not given them any substitute, but the Prime Minister had indicated two. The first was the raiding of the Sinking Fund, and that recommendation was supported by the Prime Minister by a serious error of fact and by a false analogy which was condemned in every quarter of the House except the Treasury Bench. The Prime Minister indicated another source of revenue which was much more alarming. It was contained in the closing sentences of the Budget statement. He did not think that those sentences had yet attracted in the country the attention which they deserved. The Prime Minister pointed his successor to two sources of direct taxation—death duties and income-tax—as a fruitful field whose surface he had only scratched. That source of revenue must be taken in conjunction with old-age pensions, or any other scheme for social reform. As regarded that, he thought that the contributory scheme was ruled out without sufficient examination. He thought that that was proved even by the speech of the Prime Minister himself. The right hon. Gentleman gave a description of the system in Germany which was recognised in every quarter of the House as a caricature. It was a misrepresentation. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."] It was a misrepresentation so gross that it would not have been excusable in any Member of the House, but it was almost incredible in the case of the Minister responsible for this Bill. The contributory scheme was ruled out with too much haste. Until a few weeks ago everyone, on both sides of the House, including the Prime Minister, considered that no scheme of old-age pensions could be justly brought forward which was not contributed to by the class who would benefit by that scheme. The real and vital distinction at this moment between legitimate social reform and practical Socialism was the method by which those reforms were to be paid for. If they were to be paid for by all classes of the community in proportion to their ability, then it was just and fair social reform. If, on the other hand, they were to be paid for entirely by one class exclusively for the benefit of another class, then it was practical Socialism. That was a perfectly clear issue. The Government had at last taken their line on that question and had selected the solution of the hon. Gentlemen below the gangway. The hon. Member for Blackburn the other day gave them an outline of the Budget that he would present. It was to raise the £20,000,000 necessary for old-age pensions by taxes levied upon the richer 10,000. That was very simple. But the proposal of the Prime Minister in principle did not differ in the least from the proposal of the hon. Gentleman below the gangway. The two proposals had this in common, that they both intended to tax exclusively one class for benefits to be enjoyed exclusively by another class. That was the exact position in which they were left by the unexhausted sources of civilisation as shown in the free trade finance of the Government. He was quite sure that from a practical point of view that method of raising revenue would fail. The rock upon which it would split had been pointed out clearly by the Prime Minister himself. He had shown them that last year, owing to the reduction of the income-tax to a level which was recognised as fair, there was a great increase in the sum assessed for the tax. The converse of that must be equally true. If the class to be taxed in that way regarded the tax as confiscatory when it was stretched to a point where it was considered absolutely unjust, then the source of that revenue would inevitably dry up. The hon. Member for Blackburn said that the big fortunes were precisely those which could not escape. That was wrong in fact. There was one kind of big fortune which could not escape, viz., that derived from landed property. But what about another and more important class of big fortune in this country which was derived from trade? That kind of capital was fluid, and did anyone suppose that if they began to attack it in that sort of way it would not leave this country and get beyond our reach? [AN HON. MEMBER: That is old.] It was old, he admitted. He considered that it was a commonplace on which all sections in the House were agreed. They saw now what the proposals of the Government really were. What would happen under those circumstances was shown by the hon. Member for South Hackney yesterday in a very interesting speech. He suggested that a special tax should be put on capital abroad. If that was intended to keep capital from going abroad and if he himself believed it would have that effect, he would be in favour of it. But almost in the same breath the hon. Gentleman told the House of a conversation he had had with a friend who was a Member of the Upper House—no doubt one of the newly created Members—who said that he did not pay taxation now on foreign investments. Did the hon. Gentleman think that taxation, which those who had foreign investments now evaded, would not be entirely evaded if there was an attempt to do something which would be practical confiscation of those great fortunes? But this Budget had at least this advantage—that it placed before the country a clear issue as to the way in which revenue was to be raised. The proposal of the Government was that all additional needs should be financed by direct taxation, which, in his opinion, would have precisely the opposite effect, as far as the working classes were concerned, to that which hon. Gentlemen opposite seemed to imagine. On the other hand, the proposal of the Opposition was embodied in the Amendment before the House, viz., to broaden the basis of taxation. He noticed that when that phrase was used hon. Gentlemen opposite always laughed as if they thought that sneers would get rid of the argument; but it was an argument which they could not evade so easily, and which sooner or later they would have to face. They sneered at it when it was under discussion, but when it came to practical proposals they adopted it themselves. The Government had just introduced and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had obtained the Second Reading of the Port of London Bill, and if that Bill was to be carried into effect it would involve important changes in the method of raising revenue. It would have been much simpler to raise more revenue by merely increasing the old dues on ships. But the Government did not intend to do that, because they believed that the taxation would be felt more if entirely based on ships than if divided between ships and cargo. He thought the Government were quite right. The Chancellor of the Exchequer next said that duties on goods would not produce sufficient to meet all the needs of this Budget. That was admitted. It was not proposed as a substitute for all other taxation; but the Opposition said that the great and pressing needs made it incumbent upon any Government to look about for some new method of raising revenue which would not impose an intolerable burden upon somebody or other. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "You cannot get additional revenue from taxation on manufactured goods."

When asked why not, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said because the revenue was so uncertain. Did he really regard that as a serious argument? When the death duties were imposed, they were regarded as a very uncertain source of revenue. If to-morrow the Chancellor of the Exchequer imposed a scale of duties on manufactured goods coming into this country, the officials at the Treasury would tell him, as accurately as they could tell him, the need of any other form of taxation, what the yield would be in any given year. The right hon. Gentleman next said—

> "If you carry out your proposals, you will have all these goods made at home and then you will have no revenue."

The right hon. Gentleman must know that in other countries, which had imposed duties far higher than were suggested here, the effect had been so to increase the whole trade of those countries that the imports even of manufactured goods, instead of diminishing, had actually increased. If we put on prohibitive duties, of course the revenue would dry up, but nobody proposed to do that. The right hon. Gentleman had on the previous day described him as "a thoroughgoing protectionist." Well, he did not know that he took much exception to the word protectionist if the Chancellor of the Exchequer understood what it meant. But he must deny that he was a protectionist in the sense in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer used the word in his platform speeches. He had no desire to make any change in our fiscal system which would have the effect of causing everything to be made in this country, whether this country was suited to its manufacture or not. He was not a protectionist in the crude sense of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's own Patents Act. That seemed to be the crudest and most absurd protection. Under that Act, for the sake of getting additional employment in this country, the right hon. Gentleman was going to compel all the articles protected by it to be made in this country, whether this country was suitable or not. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No, no."] Yes, that was the object of the Act. [MINISTERIAL cries of "No."]

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE, Carnarvon Boroughs): I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Gentleman, but it is just as well that he should understand what the Patents Act is. The Patents Act does not compel anybody to manufacture anything here.

It simply says that the monopoly will be withdrawn if it is abused.

MR. BONAR LAW thought he understood the Patents Act. He certainly understood it better than its author. Even by the right hon. Gentleman's explanation the effect of the Patents Act was that, unless the articles were made here, the patent would be withdrawn. He maintained that that had the effect of causing things to be made here for which this country was not suitable. It had another effect. The right hon. Gentleman said the previous day that the Opposition were very fond of making speeches in the country where they could not be contradicted; but that remark applied equally to himself. He told an audience in Lancashire that the difference between the Patents Act and protection was that the Patents Act would make things cheaper. He would ask the House to consider what the effect of the Patents Act would be in the light of a particular instance. A friend of his in Germany had for a long time been selling in this country a number of patented articles. In his factory in Germany he was able to make these things, not only for England, but for Germany as well. Under the Act of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, this gentleman had to have two factories instead of one, and the result was that the consumer here in England had to pay the increased cost resulting from the right hon. Gentleman's Patents Act. The only way to get the present House of Commons to pass an Act of protection like that was not to let hon. Members understand that it was at all contrary to the principles of free trade. So far as he was concerned, he had no desire to put on any duties in this country which would cause goods to be made here on which we were not able to compete with our rivals on equal terms. All that those who advocated this change wanted was to give our own manufacturers and our own workmen a preference in our own market which would enable them to compete better with their foreign rivals in that market. The real point of the Amendment was its financial side. Every country had found it a means of raising revenue even before they used it for protection. Even in India the Party represented by the present Government themselves used it for obtaining revenue, giving no countervailing duties, except in the case of cotton. The Secretary for War condemned these proposals, because, as he said—

> "The burden would be noticed so little that people would not exercise proper scrutiny."

The right hon. Gentleman condemned this method of raising taxation because we should not feel it. That was a disadvantage which certainly did not apply to the alternate method of the Government. Surely it was the greatest recommendation one could possibly give to any system of taxation. The extent of any burden was the extent to which we felt it. As Hamlet said—

> "For there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

If it did not seem to be a burden, then for all practical purposes it was no burden whatever.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: What about wheat? [OPPOSITION cries of "Order."] I ask the right hon. Gentleman a question and he refuses to answer it. [Renewed cries of "Order."]

MR. SPEAKER: The right hon. Gentleman is entitled to make his speech in his own way.

MR. BONAR LAW said he must follow the Chancellor of the Exchequer's example rather than his precept. He would now criticise some of the right hon. Gentleman's references to the conditions prevailing in Germany. He was amazed to hear the speech of the Prime Minister in which he contrasted so complacently the position of our finances with that of the German Empire. He was more amazed to hear the Chancellor of the Exchequer last night repeat those remarks. Last week he told the Chancellor of the Exchequer exactly what the position of German finances was. As the right hon. Gentleman had ignored those figures, he would repeat them. The price of German funds, compared with our own, was relatively much higher now than twenty years ago. To take another index—the total debt of Germany was only something like £170,000,000. In addition there were the debts of the German States, but the

German State debts might fairly be compared to the debts of local authorities in this country. Then the German nation owned the German railways, and a large part of the debt was for building these railways. They were remunerative, and more than paid the interest on the debt. From the point of view of debt, Germany was now infinitely stronger than this country. There was another test which was more important still, and that was the test of the burden of taxation upon the people of the country, for upon that depended the elasticity in time of necessity. The right hon. Gentleman following the Prime Minister spoke as if the people of Germany were suffering under an intolerable burden. The total debt per head of the German people, State and Imperial, was only something like half per head that under which the people of this country were groaning. Why, then, it was asked, did Germany borrow? He gave the explanation last week. The unification of the German system was not yet complete. A particular kind of tax could only be imposed with the consent of the different states, and such a thing as that could only be realised in this country if the proposals of some hon. Gentlemen opposite of Home Rule for England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland were an accomplished fact. If ever the stress of national emergency arose, the funds were available and would be obtained, and there was no excuse whatever for saying that Germany was in a critical fiscal condition. The facts and figures which he had given were taken from a book lately published by that distinguished writer Dr. Zahnt, who, discussing the question of armaments, had pointed out that, if the result of economy was to render a nation liable to be beaten in war, it was the worst possible kind of economy. He further pointed out that moneys spent upon armaments could be made reproductive, that in the event of war the nation which had the armament that would win would not suffer financially, but would gain. ["Oh."] And it was on the German navy that the borrowed money was now being spent. The right hon. Gentleman made another excursion into German finance. He gave figures to show that the cost of living in Germany was 6s. or 7s., as compared with 5s. in this country. The right hon. Gentleman did not say where he obtained those figures. Where did he get his figures? He expected out of his own imagination.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. ASQUITH, Fifeshire, E.): I am prepared to produce the document.

MR. BONAR LAW was glad to hear it. In regard to the whole comparison between Germany and this country, the point ought to be not whether the German people now were in as good a position as the English people, but what the comparison had been since the change in the fiscal system of Germany was made. He hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not forgotten the statistics with which he used to be familiar when President of the Board of Trade. The fiscal Blue-book pointed out that in the twenty years from 1880 to 1900 the rise in wages had been greater in Germany than in other countries, and that there had been a great fall in the cost of living in Germany. The right hon. Gentleman had pointed out that there had been a great increase in the last few years in Germany. Yes, but did he realise the increase in the cost of living in this country? Everything had risen, and to an extreme extent. For the comparative cheapness of sugar the late Government were responsible. The right hon. Gentleman read a resolution passed by a number of members of the German Parliament, a resolution that was contrary to everything German. The group in question happened to be the smallest of all the groups in the German Parliament, and, like all small groups, it was the most divided of all the groups.

AN HON. MEMBER: It was carried unanimously.

MR. BONAR LAW said that any hon. Member could get up a meeting of two men and a boy to sign a resolution against our rule in India or Egypt, or anything else. The resolution, though of course of no value, was perhaps of some little use in adding to the ignorance of foreign observers. If the observation of the right hon. Gentleman was intended to represent that there was a large body of opinion in the German Parliament and in Germany in favour of the fiscal system which prevails in this country, it was a statement made in ignorance, and appalling ignorance, of the whole political condition in Germany. There were, of course, parties in the German Parliament and among the German people who were opposed to the present volume of taxation, and who desired to see the tariff reduced; but there was no political party of any kind which would recommend that their market should be left open without restriction to the competition of Britsh goods. If any proof of that were necessary it was to be found in the fact that the leader of the very little group to which the right hon. Gentleman referred last night recently stated in public that the idea of a free trade Parliament was rooted out in Germany.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. CHURCHILL, Dundee): I had not intended to intervene in this discussion, but some statements of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down I think require some rejoinder from this bench. Really I do not remember ever to have heard before such a succession of remarkable observations of various kinds, covering such a wide range of policy and economics, in the course of so brief and closely-reasoned a speech. Perhaps the most striking, or, at any rate, one of the most striking, of his assertions was the protest of the hon. Gentleman that he was not a protectionist, and he showed that he had his own interpretation of protection. He said that the Patents Act was a measure of protection—crude protection. A patent is in itself a protection. It is a restriction upon free trade—a very proper and prudent restriction given by the State. It is a protection of monopoly and privilege given to an inventor in order to stimulate invention. We say that that privilege should not be extended except in so far as it conduces to the public advantage. That is what my right hon. friend has done in regard to the privilege of patents. He has taken care that the monopoly shall not be extended beyond those limits in which it can be shown that it will develop industrial enterprise. Before that measure was passed it was open to a foreigner to obtain a patent in this country, and, in virtue of that piece of parchment, to employ a British policeman to stop British manufacturers from embarking upon that industry at all, no matter how desirable and suitable it was that such an industry should be created in this country. What a shocking and absurd state of things that we should artificially, and by a law of our own, in virtue of no other power than our own self-denying ordinance, fetter the free activity of our own people in regard to some manufacture for which our country was peculiarly suited! But where was the hon. Gentleman when all this was going on? He stands out as the protector of British trade, the sole friend of the manufacturers of this country. What was he doing during the two years his influence was active at the Board of Trade? What were he and his friends doing but enforcing day by day the law which forbade British manufacturers, at the behest of foreign subjects, from embarking on industries for which this country was economically suited? What we have done is not to establish protection. We have said that in certain circumstances where the privilege does not conduce to the public interest here, the privilege should be withdrawn, and the patent no longer operate. Does that mean protection? No, it means we revert to free trade. [OPPOSITION cheers.] It is of no use for hon. Gentlemen to laugh. We revert to free trade in that particular article. From the moment the patent lapses the article can be made by everybody, whether in England, Germany, or France, and sent into this country without adverse discrimination of any kind. That is what the hon. Gentleman calls protection. We should be quite content if that were the only protection we were advised to give. We ask no more than that there shall be a fair field and no favour, and where a patent is withdrawn absolute free trade in it will be the consequence of such withdrawal. The hon. Gentleman made a great many statements in regard to Germany which will, I think, have to be examined a little more critically and carefully in the course of the next few days. He challenged the Chancellor of the Exchequer in regard to certain figures which he quoted, and I understood from my right hon. friend that he will take steps to place those figures at the disposal of the hon. Gentleman and leave the House to judge. He also asked for the production of a particular document, and there is no objection to giving him entire satisfaction. I ask the House to notice particularly in regard to Germany one remark of the hon. Member, because it is really an illuminating remark; it shows the political inwardness of the protectionist mind. The hon. Gentleman quoted an opinion of Dr. Zahnt—and indicated that he shared it—that armaments may be made reproductive.

MR. BONAR LAW: I only said it was something which we in this country ought to take to heart.

MR. CHURCHILL: I notice that whenever we get to an important point in this controversy the hon. Gentleman and his friends decline to give a plain answer. Here in the course of an argument designed to show the goodness of the position of Germany financially and in credit he says that armaments are no doubt a heavy burden, but he quotes, to show that that burden is not so heavy as it appears, the observation of Dr. Zahnt that armaments may be made reproductive. I am in the recollection of the House when I say that the natural consequence of that argument is that he quoted the statement of Dr. Zahnt with a measure of approval.

MR. BONAR LAW was understood to dissent.

MR. CHURCHILL: At any rate, he thought the statement was one pregnant with truth. This is not a very new policy. The idea that if you murder a man you may subsequently steal his money is a very primitive one. The great Napoleon for many years insisted on maintaining the whole fabric of his Empire on contributions levied by force on foreign States, but I am not of opinion that the ultimate historical conclusion of that great experiment could be said to be profitable either for Napoleon or the country over which he presided. When we are told that armaments may be made reproductive, what about the South African War? Great gold mines were at stake, great armaments were employed, vast sums of money were spent, but there is no result at present of a financial character, and no dividend of a satisfactory or remunerative character has yet been achieved by this country. For myself I welcome this opportunity of repudiating altogether on the part of the great majority in this House the idea that we should be animated in our expenditure on armaments by any hope of making a profit out of such shocking means of human destruction. Then the hon. Gentleman proceeded to speak of the German financial position. With a great deal of what he said I should not be disposed to quarrel. He spoke of the small debt of Imperial Germany; I think he said it was £200,000,000. He showed how much of that debt was remunerative. It was invested in State railways and produced a valuable return. It was more comparable to the debts of our local authorities than to our National Debt, which, as everybody knows, represents only one thing—gunpowder. He proceeded to show how the debt, local and national, in Germany was only half the National Debt which exists in this country per head of the population. I have heard an expression "money talks." Let us see what the markets of the world have to say to the imposing catalogue of German financial assets. In spite of all these advantages which Germany possesses over us—a smaller debt, the reproductive character of that debt, the valuable possessions of the State in forests, railways, and minerals—what is the rate at which Germany has to borrow in the markets of the world? We can borrow at something under 3 per cent., whereas the German Empire, enjoying all the advantages of scientific taxation, has to pay 4 per cent. for money secured on all these assets. There can be no other test of the credit of a country than the price at which it can borrow. I am content to be guided in my conclusion by the ordinary market price at which the country can borrow. Judged by that prosaic and simple test, the hon. Gentlemen's arguments only serve to establish it on more unshaken foundations. The hon. Gentleman then proceeded to reproach us with our finance. Each party in the State admires its own record, and I can quite understand that in a speech in a controversial debate a speaker on the opposite side should be glad to contrast our record with the record of his friends. But of all subjects, I should have thought finance was the one which he would most carefully and prudently have avoided. I should have thought when the hon. Gentleman was considering on what subject to criticise the Government the one word of warning which he would have kept before his eyes was never to refer to the financial policy of the Opposition in his speech. The record of hon. Gentlemen opposite was to impose taxation. The record of His Majesty's Government has been to take off taxation. The record of the Party opposite was to pile up expenditure year by year beyond all expectation or precedent. The course of this Government has been thriftily, with care and pain and with the suffering and affliction which necessarily attend upon a policy of retrenchment, to reduce expenditure steadily year by year, so far as our opportunities have admitted.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN (Worcestershire, E.): You have increased it.

MR. CHURCHILL: We have reduced the unproductive expenditure of the State. Armaments are the unproductive element of expenditure; it is in that branch particularly that the finance of the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite deserved criticism and censure, and it is in that very matter that we have succeeded in making notable and substantial reductions. Lastly, I come to the question of Debt. The hon. Gentleman used the expression that we propose to raid the Sinking Fund. When a Party leaves office, having piled on the Debt £120,000,000 or £130,000,000, having left the borrowing practices of every department in a wholly unsound and unsatisfactory condition, having in years of peace increased the aggregate capital liabilities of the State, and having in the last two years of their responsible authority only reduced the capital liabilities of the State by, I think, £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, then, when that Party has been succeeded by an administration which in three years has been able to reduce those liabilities by between £40,000,000 and £50,000,000—a provision utterly unequalled in the experience of this country—silence, I should have thought, would have been the best policy. The hon. Gentleman's omissions were as remarkable as his assertions. We are confronted with an Amendment which urges the broadening of the basis of taxation. When the Government make a proposal, they are bound to make their proposal in all detail; and if an effective debate is to be conducted when the Opposition move an Amendment embodying a considered statement of policy, they ought to support that statement of policy by facts without which it is only meaningless jargon. What then, is your policy of broadening the basis of taxation? The hon. Gentleman spoke of a duty on manufactured articles. Is that the only duty he had in his mind? We are not afraid as free traders to discuss the merits of a duty on manufactured articles. We believe that on careful investigation it will be found just as susceptible to effective criticism as the duties on food, bread, and meat, which the hon. Gentleman omitted to notice. I am informed that a duty on manufactured articles, which is spoken of commonly as if it were a single duty, involves duties on at least 250 or 260 substantial and main categories of imports. Each of these articles is susceptible of much further classification. I make no doubt, from what I am credibly informed, that many hundreds of articles would be placed on the schedule of what is called a duty on manufactured articles. The hon. Gentleman must also remember that any enhancement of prices which might occur in this country owing to a duty being placed on manufactured articles, would inflict a hardship not only on the manufacturing population, who, it might be argued, would obtain some return, but also on the agricultural population, who would be forced to pay more for all the commodities they use, and would not get any returning measure of protection to compensate for their losses, if such compensation could be effective. It is well-known that no scheme of fiscal reform will ever be tolerated or put forward by the Party opposite which does not provide for protection of the farming and landlord classes in regard to agricultural products at least equal to the measure of protection afforded to manufacturers for manufactured articles. And, Sir, I say that the two things, the taxation of food and the taxation of manufactured articles, are inseparably interwoven, and must stand or fall together. For my part, I have always believed we shall be able to smash the taxation of manufactured articles in this House, and I am quite sure we shall be able to smash the taxation of food. The hon. Gentleman opposite, in spite of the intimate association between these two questions, contented himself by referring solely to the taxation of manufactured articles. I ask him now, specifically across the Table, does he include within the scope of this Amendment the taxation of bread and meat?

MR. BONAR LAW: Make me Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I will answer you.

MR. CHURCHILL: An Amendment has been put on the Paper specifically urging the broadening of the basis of taxation, and many Gentlemen of distinction and eloquence on that side of the House have risen in support of it. They have risen to explain it, and they owe an explanation to the House and the country; they owe it to themselves, and they owe it, if they wish to do justice, to those Members of their own Party who are, perhaps, prepared to support a general tariff on manufactured goods, but are pledged against the taxation of food. Therefore I think it is a fair question, and I think it will be thought so outside. On this Amendment this evening, when it comes to voting upon it, are those who vote for it voting for the taxation of bread and meat as well as of manufactured articles, or are they voting only for the taxation of manufactured articles? Surely that is a question which should have an answer. But no answer will be given, not because the hon. Gentleman opposite could not rise in his place at once and say: "Of course I mean to support the right hon. gentleman the Member for Birmingham in his policy of the taxation of bread and meat"—he could do that in a moment —but because it would interrupt the harmony. It would mar the sweet concord between the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the City of London, sitting there side by side. Could the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dulwich take the responsibility of introducing such an explosive topic? It is tact that has led him to withhold this important explanation from the House. It is tact, and it is tact only. But we know perfectly well the proposals the hon. Gentleman had in mind, and the House is perfectly well able to estimate the reasons and the motives of the hon. Gentleman's silence. I have one word to say of a more general character before I sit down. It is, I venture to submit to the House, when discussions on broadening the basis of taxation are raised, a mistake to suppose that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be able to get more money for the public service by putting on many taxes than by putting on a few. There are some people who think the Chancellor of the Exchequer would get all he wants by putting on only one. But, at any rate, the wealth which is laboriously accumulated by our people in the course of the year is contained in a central reservoir of national wealth, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer may draw off for the services of the year so much as Parliament gives him leave to take. It makes no difference to the total amount of our accumulated wealth whether it is taxed through one or twenty or even 500 outlets—except this, that every outlet which is made from the reservoir has its own leakages. Multiply your outlets and you multiply the leakages; and we believe that our old established and carefully-considered fiscal system has resulted in the collection of the maximum possible revenue with the least possible waste in the course of collection. When we are told to broaden the basis of taxation by the imposition of duties on the imports of the country, not to be corrected by a countering Excise, upon the face of it it is absurd to contend and to suggest that more money can be raised for the service of the State by unorthodox and, I would say, dishonest methods than can be raised by those simple methods which secure the whole yield of the taxes to the Exchequer. Why, Sir, the great principle which this House ought to guard and cherish is that, when the tax collector comes to the private citizen and takes from him of his wealth for the service of the public, the whole of that money taken shall go for the purposes for which it is intended, and that no private interests, however powerfully they may be organised and however eloquently advocated, shall thrust their dirty fingers into the pie and take the profit for themselves. There is but one other point I wish to make before I sit down, and it is the last argument I would submit to the House with respect to the Amendment which has been proposed. We are asked to broaden the basis of taxation. That means we are asked to increase the ratio of indirect taxation and to diminish the ratio of direct taxation. That means in other words, that we are to make the poor pay more. It means nothing else. Very remarkable figures have several times been quoted in this House with regard to the ratio of taxation. In 1841–2 the ratio was 73 per cent. indirect and 27 per cent. direct. Ever since that period with every extension of the franchise, with every development of what we call democratic Government, with every improvement in the general, social, and political conditions of the country, the ratio of the two classes of taxation has steadily and ceaselessly altered. Indirect taxation as a whole has always become less and less in proportion, and direct taxation has always become more and more, until so strong has the remorseless pressure of events become that even under a Conservative administration actual parity and equipoise were established in 1903, and in the present year the scale was markedly turned on the side of the direct taxpayer who actually contributes a larger proportion of the total revenue of the State than the indirect taxpayer. That is a great evolution; not only a financial evolution but a social evolution. It marks the steady march and progress of democratic finance in this country, and, for my part, I suggest to the House that no efforts should be neglected which will continue that movement and that tendency until, in the end, indirect taxation which presses on the shoulders of the masses of the people, is reduced only to that class of indulgences which, perhaps, a wise and prudent Government would seek to check and discourage, and the burden of maintaining the cost of administration is in every respect exclusively borne by those who derive rents from land and interest from capital. That movement of taxation to which I have alluded is directly countered and challenged by the Amendment now before the House. We are asked by those who propose the Amendment to set the tide back. We are asked, not merely to maintain the existing social balance in our land, and the existing balance of fortune as between rich and poor, and that is hard enough in all conscience for many of them. We are asked deliberately to turn the scale in the opposite direction. We are asked deliberately to carry the war into their country and to make, in the name of broadening the basis of taxation, an effective attempt to alter the social balance to the detriment of those who live by weekly wages, and to the advantage of those who live by interest on accumulated capital. Against that movement I have no doubt this House, at any rate, will stand firm. If the hon. Gentleman opposite with his power of reasoning and argumentative skill were to ask us to consider other proposals for broadening the basis we might be glad to go with him. If he asked us to broaden the basis of society, to broaden the basis of education, to raise the general basis of culture and comfort throughout our land, there, indeed, is a work in which we could co-operate with the Party opposite; but we shall embrace this opportunity, we shall welcome this opportunity of once again recording an absolute opposition, unqualified and emphatic, against a policy which seeks to broaden the basis of taxation by making it press more heavily on the threadbare shoulders of the poor.

*MR. HILLS (Durham) said that by all the axioms of taxation it could not be right that all the revenue of the country should come from one tax. Of course, the argument for indirect taxation was a far broader one than that. He wanted to answer a few points that the President of the Board of Trade had made. He had made a very severe attack on his hon. friend, and had taunted him with quoting with approval a statement of a German author. It was surely well known that that view was widely held on the Continent, and whether right or wrong it was a view of which the House ought to take account. It would be a dangerous state of mind if this House and the party opposite were to imagine that the whole world was animated by the idealism which inspired some of them. It was not so. Surely all those facts were extremely important, and they could not afford to disregard them. They had been told that German finance was very unsound; that Germany was borrowing money to build her fleet. That might be right or wrong, but it was a consistent policy which the German people supported and one in which they meant to persevere. They were building their Fleet out of capital because their financial system was too cramped and restricted and they could not at the present time tap all the resources of their country. No doubt the time would come under the stress of war or some great danger when the whole country would be forced into some sort of real unity‘ and until that time came, although the money was there and the country was very rich, it could not be reached, and the German nation was tiding over that time by the use of capital instead of income. The right hon. Gentleman made some play upon the word "protection" and denied that the recent Patents Act was a protectionist measure. He listened with amazement to that statement. The right hon. Gentleman said that all patents were monopolies, and that if they further restricted a monopoly that was a free trade measure. Under the old law before the recent Act the owner of a British patent could manufacture in any part of the world he chose, but now he had to manufacture in this country. He entirely supported that Act, and he regarded it as a form of protection. It was really amusing to see the straits to which hon. Gentlemen opposite were put in trying to defend the Patents Act upon free trade lines, and until the right hon. Gentleman rose he did not think anybody had defended it upon those grounds. The object of that measure was perfectly obvious and clear, for it was the means of bringing employment to this country on the part of people who sought the protection of our laws. When a person got the advantage of our patent system it was only right that he should be obliged to work the patent in this country, and give employment to our own people. From the point of view of free trade and the consumer it did not matter where an article was made so long as it was sold cheaply, but surely this Act from that point of view was quite indefensible. The Opposition had been attacked on the ground that they had not shown the exact meaning of the Amendment, and because they would not explain the meaning of the phrase "broaden the basis of taxation." He should have thought very little explanation was necessary. If the President of the Board of Trade would look round Europe he would see plenty of examples of a broader basis of taxation than existed in this country. At the present time we imposed certain taxes and import duties on certain articles, and his point was that it would suit us as a nation to change the incidence of some of those taxes and impose them on manufactured articles produced in this country. A large amount of Customs duties we paid now—in fact we paid more than any other country in the world, and they were all paid on things which were not produced in this country. There were cases in which it would pay us better to shift those duties on to things which we did produce, and that would give employment to the people of this country. They were met with the argument that if a tax was protective, and kept out the foreign article no revenue would be derived, whilst, if it did not keep out the foreign article, there would be no advantage to home employment. As a matter of fact under the system he suggested they would get the advantage both ways. When foreign goods came in they had to pay the Customs duties. They would have to meet strong competition and come in at the home price. If that was so, then the foreign importer could not sell at a higher price and he would have to pay the duty, and, in that way, the revenue would benefit. If the goods were kept out, home production was stimulated, and so they benefited in both cases. He agreed that this would not happen in a simple case. Certain articles would be kept out to a certain extent, and some would not. In so far as they came in they would contribute to the revenue and in so far as they were kept out they would benefit the trade of this country. He could not see any answer to that. Surely all parties in this House were interested in home production and industries and, if by a tax they could effect an increase of industry, surely it was worth trying. A tax could do a great deal of good. They had been told that if the taxpayer knew what he was paying, it would stir in him the divine spirit of economy and he would look more to the expenses. He would far rather collect the taxes without any friction, or hardship, or burden on the person paying the tax. A tax could be made to keep out certain foreign articles and turn the course of trade, and it was for that reason that he argued in favour of a revenue tax. They had to find out the way a tax would affect them in all the varieties of their daily life. It was not enough to say they had simply to get revenue for the State; besides that, they had to see the exact effect of a tax on the national life, and that was why they ought not to regard it merely for the purpose of collecting revenue. They had carefully to consider its effect on the industries of the country and see how far it would stimulate them or the reverse. They had to look at the country as a whole and adopt that system which would stimulate most their industries. A few weeks ago a proposal was made from that side of the House that the duty on home-grown sugar should be suspended in order to encourage the production of beetroot sugar in England. It would have been a very small industry and would have employed very few people. Still, it would have employed some, and might have been the starting of a large industry, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer at once refused to accept the proposal, and it was extremely hard to find any reason for that refusal. The price could not have been raised by growing beetroot sugar in England, and so the consumer would not have been affected. It was a very small thing; the Chancellor of the Exchequer could have licensed a few acres and afterwards might have extended the project if successful. He could have limited the production to a very small area and it was quite clear the revenue would not have been appreciably affected. It could not have done very much harm, because, for many years to come, the production would have been so small that the loss of revenue would have been insignificant. It had always been to him very extraordinary why the free trade party would not stir a single finger to help British industries. He should like to know if that was the doctrine of all free traders, because it was surely a *reductio ad absurdum.* There was a chance here of increasing employment, and yet they refused to avail themselves of that chance for no reason that had been stated. Surely statesmen were not there to carry out any preconceived notions of their own, and, if that was so, why should they sit still and allow their hands to be tied when by a very simple act, by which the State would not lose at all, they might confer very great benefit? It seemed to him that the free trade party opposite insisted on regarding the whole nation as though they were consumers. He would have thought that in a strong industrial country the most important person was the producer. Why should the person who consumed be more important to the State than the producer? If there was one person in the State whom they should look after it was the producer. Everybody was a producer. If a man invested his money somewhere, that money would be used for the purposes of production, and, therefore, the investor was a producer. He could not conceive the case of a man who was not a producer, except, indeed, the case where a man hoarded his money and did not allow it to be used in industrial concerns. He could not imagine the case of a man who was a consumer only. That brought him to the question of the income-tax. The same people who talked about this as a nation of consumers only were all strong supporters of the proposal to put higher taxes on incomes. If they could tax the idle rich, and if all their incomes were unearned, as some hon. Members still seemed to think they were, he would not object to increase the income-tax. But income-tax was not paid half so much by individuals as by industry, and it really was the very worst tax to increase from the national point of view. He was afraid that the income-tax at a certain figure was now a permanent part of our financial system. Still he regarded with great suspicion all the talk about a graduated tax and a super tax. It was simply means of piling up the tax on productive wealth. They could not distinguish between productive and non-productive wealth; it passed the wit of man to do so. If a man had special wealth which he employed in increasing the wealth of the community, he could not see any reason why that man should bear any special form of taxation. Some hon. Members who did not want to increase indirect taxation found refuge in proposals for the taxation of land values. That was a sort of happy land of which they knew nothing, but they regarded it as a place where all evils could be redressed. He quite agreed that any wealth which the community created was a fair subject of taxation. It was just as fair a subject of taxation as railway stock. If a man bought railway stock which went up in price the increase in the value was not caused by anything done by the holder of the stock; it was the community that gave the increased value. He failed to distinguish the increase in the value of an investment of that kind from the increase in the value of land. They had often been told that if they taxed the land they would diminish the price of it. He wished he could believe that the argument was sound; if it were sound, he could see some very valuable extensions of the argument. What he and his friends on that side of the House said was that industry and employment were not promoted by extending the income-tax so much as by imposing small duties on a large number of articles. The argument as to convenience of collection was all, he believed, on the side of hon. Gentlemen opposite. It was far easier to collect the sugar tax than separate taxes on a number of manufactured articles. But they had to look at the effect of these duties upon the country. It was because the income-tax was almost all a tax on industry and production that he regarded with apprehension the tendency to raise it. He had not heard a single speaker in this debate who had really argued for a practical scheme of retrenchment, except the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who spoke about the reduction of expenditure on armaments. Surely it was perfectly well known that no real reduction was possible in that direction in the immediate future. It was a delusive hope to hold out. It could not be done. All branches of the public service wanted more money. No one had got up and argued in favour of the old Liberal doctrine of retrenchment. Now under a Liberal Government the country was spending more money than it had done under the most expensive Conservative Government. He was not in the least blaming hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench. Retrenchment was impossible, and now they had to look for fresh sources of revenue. He submitted that it was extremely important to collect the money from the taxpayers in the way that they would feel the payment least, and in the way that would most stimulate the industries of the country.

*MR. SUMMERBELL (Sunderland) said that he was just as ignorant now of the specific articles which the Members of the Opposition wished to tax as when the debate commenced. He and many of his colleagues regretted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not able to take the extra duty off tea this session. They were all pleased, however, that a ¼d. per pound had been taken off sugar, and they hoped that next session there would be a reduction of the tea duty and a repeal of what remained of the sugar duty. One of the most remarkable declarations he had heard during the debate was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last night when he stated that it was the desire of the Government to abolish all taxes upon food, and to place the taxes upon people who were well able to bear them. He was pleased to hear that declaration, because it was altogether in the direction which the Labour Party and some Members on the Liberal side of the House had advocated for a long time. They had advocated that, instead of taxing the food of the people, the revenue should be got from a graduated income-tax, so that every man and woman in the land should pay according to their ability. What opposition could there be to the raising of taxation in that manner? He was delighted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was prepared to steer his ship in the next session of Parliament in that particular direction. He had heard a great deal about the broadening of the basis of taxation from Members of the Opposition. He had been wondering where they were going to commence. This debate was near the finish, and the House had not been told where they were going to start. It was not a broadening, but a narrowing of the basis of taxation that was wanted. It was too broad already for the working classes, and they wanted to put it in a narrower compass; to impose a graduated income-tax which would give to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the best value and which he hoped would be ultimately adopted. They had been told the usual story about protection and duties on imported goods, manufactured timber, and other articles. He had a right to say that they were bound to judge hon. Members' speeches in the House according to their remarks outside. He represented a town which had passed through a very severe trade depression and where a great deal of unemployment prevailed. Certain Gentlemen said to the workless workers that what they ought to do was to adopt the method of protection, and then the problem of unemployment would be solved. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire went to Sunderland a short time ago and told the working men that protection would be a remedy for unemployment.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN said that, if the hon. Gentleman referred specially to him, he had never suggested that there would be no unemployment if our fiscal system were reformed. What he advocated was a reform of our fiscal system as a means of increasing employment in this country.

*MR. SUMMERBELL said he understood that the right hon. Gentleman and his friends brought forward protection as a remedy for unemployment. Germany had been much talked about in the House. That very day he had received a letter from a friend in Germany in which he said—

> "I have just received my first demand-note for taxes. The German Army will receive from me about thirty marks a year, the Church about twenty, and the remaining seventy marks will be employed for municipal purposes. So I am in for a little over £7 a year, all told!
>
> The Vaterland is really a very dear country to live in. The wages of the working-man are lower than in England, and he works longer hours too. Excepting cigars and beer, everything costs him more than the English worker. Rents are oppressively high. Three rooms in Essen cannot be had for under thirty-five marks per month. Five rooms on a flat cannot be had for less than sixty marks. A suit that costs £3 in England, cannot be bought for under £4 here. In fact, clothes of any kind are at least 25 per cent. dearer than in England, and the material is not so good. It looks well, and here its recommendation ends."

That was a letter dated 24th May, and, therefore, was not written for the purposes of this debate. The writer was a young man, an English clerk in a German house, who had been in various parts of the world; and yet hon. and right hon. Gentlemen got up in the House and said that all was well in Germany on account of their adoption of protection. He was astounded at their audacity in quoting Germany to working men, for anyone who knew the facts was aware that in Germany the working men worked longer hours and for lower wages in any calling than in this country. At the last general election in Germany 3,250,000 votes were cast for the Party to which he and his friends belonged in this country; and a manifesto was issued by all the Socialist and Labour men which stated—

> "Down with protection, which has been a curse to the poor and a benefit to the rich in Germany."

He also knew that the Socialists and labour men in that country stated that if they had a proper system of proportional representation in Germany they would soon have free trade. If protection was going to be the solution for unemployment in this country, how was it that there were 60,000 unemployed in Berlin demanding work and a reduction of the taxes on food? And how was it that there there were 5,000,000 of men unemployed in America and many thousands in France? No, protection would be no remedy for unemployment. He appealed to hon. and right hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition Benches not to play with the unemployed and fool them by telling them that protection was a remedy for unemployment. If they did, they might rest assured that the unemployed working men in this country would take things into their own hands and act in their own particular way before long. What was wanted was to discuss this question in a serious mood with the view of finding a solution for unemployment. When comparisons were made between France and Germany and this country, it should be remembered that for every ton of steel rails or ship plates produced in this country we had to pay to the idle landed aristocracy a royalty of something like 5s. 6d. per ton, whereas in Germany the royalty amounted to from 8d. to 1s. 6d. per ton, and that went to the State and not to private individuals. Hon. Gentlemen above the gangway on the Opposition side did not tell these things to the working men of this country If they told that side of the story working men would realise how industry was handicapped in that direction compared with the iron and steel industry in Germany It had been said that ratepayers were paying a heavier burden year by year and that some relief should be given to them. He had been a member of a borough council for fifteen years, and had always taken the greatest interest in the ratepayers in both town and rural districts. Hon. Gentlemen above the gangway on the Opposition side had in their mind's eye the increased rates on the people in the rural districts—upon land as against rates on property in large industrial centres. He remembered well the Agricultural Landowners' Relief Bill, as it was called, which was passed by the Tory Government some years ago, and which placed £7,000 additional taxation on the ratepayers in the town which he represented in order to give the £2,000,000 a year to the landowners of the country. But when those people were crying out about the undue rates imposed on them as landowners, he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would pay no heed to them. Slowly but surely the incidence of taxation had been shifted off the shoulders of those interested in land on to the shoulders of those who occupied houses and other property in the towns. In 1871 the rates borne by land amounted to £6,730,000 and on house and other property to £3,370,000. In 1868 land gave £5,500,000 and other property £11,000,000. In 1891 land gave £4,260,000 and other property £23,560,000. Or to put it another way, in 1817 the percentage was land 66·66 per cent. and other property 33·33 per cent.; whereas in 1891 the taxation had been shifted round and house and other property in towns was bearing 84·69 per cent. of the whole of the rates. Therefore, in his opinion instead of any further relief being given to landowners the Agricultural Landlords' Relief Act ought to be abolished. The representatives of the landowners in the House had cried year in and year out for relief in regard to taxation, local and Imperial. In spite of all the relief given what was the position to-day? Compared with 1860 land paid £1,000,000 less in rates, and instead of imposing a tax on imported food he urged the Chancellor of the Exchequer to tax land more and other property less in order to get revenue for social reforms. More land would by that means be cultivated than at present. With regard to old-age pensions, as one who had been a member of a trade society for twenty-seven years and of a friendly society for twenty years, he hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would not stick to the 10s. maximum which he intended to put in the Bill. After he had been a member of his trade society for forty years he would be entitled to a superannuation allowance of 10s. a week, and if after being a member of his friendly society for, say thirty years, he should get a shilling or two of an allowance he would be debarred from receiving an old-age pension. He appealed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer as one directly interested in trade and friendly societies to alter the proposed maximum from 10s. to 15s. or even £1 a week.

*MR. HICKS BEACH (Gloucestershire, Tewkesbury) said that hon. Gentlemen opposite were returned to Parliament pledged to economy, and during the month preceding the general election every one of them went about the country declaring to the electors that when the Liberal Party returned to power they would largely decrease the national expenditure. He was afraid that the electors had found out that those sanguine anticipations had been completely falsified. If hon. Members would refer to the total expenditure budgeted for this year they would find that provision was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer for an expenditure of £152,869,000, and that that sum was in excess of the provision in the last Budget of the Tory Government which allowed for an expenditure of £151,788,000. Whatever might be the desires and wishes of hon. Gentlemen opposite, it was obviously quite impossible for them to reduce the general expenditure of the country next year without decreasing the strength of the Navy or Army, and that would be absolutely inconsistent with the declaration made by the Prime Minister, who had stated that if Germany carried out a large shipbuilding programme this country would not be behind in strengthening her Navy. They also had to recognise this fact—that under the present Budget the Government not only did nothing to satisfy the claims made upon them for many years past in the shape of grants for the alleviation of the burden of local taxation, but they had increased the claims on the Exchequer enormously by giving old-age pensions. The President of the Board of Trade had declared that it had been the policy of the Liberal Party since they had come into power to pay off the liabilities of their predecessors and to reduce taxation. They had reduced taxation certainly, but nobody could believe that the liability they had undertaken in regard to old-age pensions would enable them to relieve taxation in the years to come. As a result of the Old-age Pensions Bill taxation would have to be increased. The Prime Minister and the Government took credit to themselves for the fact that by the next year the Government would have in three years paid off no less than £47,000,000 of Debt. That was a matter of which the Government might be proud, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer ignored one important point, which was that of £47,000,000 of Debt paid by him no less than £13,500,000 was provided by surpluses from the Budgets, which, as everybody knew, had by law to be appropriated to the reduction of Debt. The Chancellor of the Exchequer ought not to take too much credit for that £13,500,000, because it was obvious that one of two things must have occurred. Either the right hon. Gentleman or his advisers must have unwittingly under-estimated the revenue, or else, having accurately estimated the revenue, they had deceived the public by imposing unnecessary taxation on the country. But whilst the Debt had been reduced in that way the Government at the same time had announced to the country that they were bringing in a scheme of old-age pensions on a non-contributory basis. He had listened in vain for some valid arguments from hon. Members opposite as to why old-age pensions should be given on such a basis, but although hon. Members might have good arguments at the bottom of their hearts they had been careful during the debate not to bring them to the surface. He could not help thinking that the scheme of old-age pensions on a non-contributory basis was not one that this House ought to support. Such a Bill was not a direct incentive to thrift, but on the contrary a direct incentive to every person in the country to be as unthrifty as possible. If a scheme of old-age pensions was about to be brought forward he thought the people who were to benefit by such a scheme should pay something directly or indirectly to the scheme by which they were to benefit and on that ground he objected to the Government proposal to halve the sugar tax. The right hon. Gentleman next year would have strong appeals made to him to remit the half of the sugar duty that now remained. As to that the Prime Minister had told the House this year that by remitting half the duty he would relieve the general consumers of this country. The same thing was said about the tea duty when he took half off the year before last, but when the same question was raised on last year's Budget the right hon. Gentleman said he found he was mistaken, and that it was no use taking off another penny. He did not know whether the Chancellor of the Exchequer would come to the same conclusion when the sugar duty came up for discussion next year, but he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not listen to the appeals that would be made to him to repeal this duty altogether. It brought in £6,700,000, and there was no duty which could be put on that would yield so much with such ease and without doing any serious harm to the consumer. Various proposals had been put forward by hon. Members opposite and below the gangway for providing the sums required for old-age pensions in the future. The sum, which started with the Prime Minister's estimate of £6,000,000, was quickly increased by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to £7,000,000, and, judging from the remarks which came from all sides of the House, it would in a very few years be increased to £16,000,000. Hon. Members below the gangway opposite thought that all this might be secured by an increased income-tax on large incomes. The hon. Member for North Paddington pleaded very hard for such a scheme. He did not call it a super-tax, but a graduated income-tax. A super-tax or a tax of a larger sum on incomes over a certain amount could only be collected by one of two methods, the method of degression, namely, by putting a 2s. tax upon all incomes, and leaving those whose incomes were below £5,000 to claim for an abatement of a portion of the tax, or by requiring those whose incomes were over £5,000 a year to make a declaration of their income. It was pointed out by the Select Committee that it would be a great inconvenience to adopt the first method, and with regard to the second, which was the one advocated by the hon. Member for Paddington, he would refer the hon. Member to the remarks made by the Prime Minister last year, which gave very good reasons why it would be almost impossible to force a general declaration from persons whose income was more than £5,000 a year. A further objection to a high tax on large incomes was that it tended to destroy or at any rate contract the most readily available reserve on which the State could draw in the case of an emergency. That was the most serious danger of a high income-tax. It appeared to be the policy of hon. Members opposite not to keep the income-tax for use in the case of an emergency, but to impose a high tax for the purposes of defraying the general expenditure of the country and the old-age pension scheme in particular. He strongly objected to national finance of that nature. Reference had been made in the debate to one reform most urgently needed throughout the country, a question that had been before the Government for a good many years. He referred to the reform of local taxation, and he had hoped that the Government would have done something in the present Budget to remove a grievance that had existed for so many years. The Government accepted earlier in the session a Resolution dealing with the subject, and assented to a Motion that the present system of local taxation needed the immediate attention of the Government. It was perfectly clear to anybody conversant with the work of county councils and county borough councils that they were now in a very serious situation. The rates had increased from 3s. 8d. in the £ in 1889–90 to 5s. 11d. in 1904–5, notwithstanding that during that period the rateable value had increased 38·4 per cent. He believed that the agricultural ratepayer had a very serious grievance at the present moment, in spite of the Agricultural Rating Act of the last Government, which had not benefited the landlord as an hon. Member below the gangway had said just now. [Cries of "Oh."] Hon. Members opposite seemed to object to that statement, but he had observed that all the Liberal candidates who went to the agricultural districts had said that they would vote for a renewal of the Act. That was in very marked contrast to the action of the Liberal Party when the matter was brought before the House. The Prime Minister, a few weeks ago, had admitted in the House that the agricultural community still had a serious grievance. The farmer who was rated on his land and buildings, that was to say the raw material of his industry, had a very real grievance as compared with the man who had a fixed income, lived in one house, and owned no other property subject to rates, and also as compared with the tradesman in the town, who was rated only on his house and shop premises. But what he wished particularly to put before the House was the fact of the general increase of expenditure that had been incurred by local authorities for what were really national services. The expenditure of the local authorities in 1888–9 was

£48,000,000, and it had increased in 1904–5 to £107,000,000. These figures showed that the local authorities were now incurring an enormous expenditure on national services which ought to be paid for more largely out of the National Exchequer. The tendency also was not to take duties away from local authorities, but to increase the obligations put upon them. One party came into power and passed a Small Holdings Bill which had increased very largely the work of local authorities. In the present session the Government had brought forward the Housing Bill, which, if carried, would largely increase the work of the local authorities. It seemed to him that if the House went on as it had done in the past twenty years, passing over fifty Acts which had thrown additional work and liabilities on the local authorities instead of relieving them, it would lead to a very serious condition of administration. Both sides would admit that the local authorities in the past had carried out the duties entrusted to them with great industry and ability; but if they continued to force them to carry out what were really national services as well as local services, they would bring about a serious state of things. Those people who had an aptitude for county business would find themselves unable to devote to it the time required, and the result would be that they would have the whole work run by a body of paid officials, or a class of county administrators would spring up who would not possess the confidence of the electors, and who would apply their powers for their own ends and not for the general welfare. That he believed to be a real danger, and he thought the way to avoid it, and also to relieve what was a very serious burden and grievance, was for the Government to take over some of these national services which were now rendered by local authorities. He believed it to be possible for the Government to take into their hands the administration of the police, and also the entire administration of the lunatics of the country. He believed, too, it would be a good thing if they eventually took over the entire administration of the workhouses, leaving the local authorities to administer outdoor relief. He believed that on those lines they could afford important and real relief to the local ratepayers of the counties, without waiting for that very vague thing, a really honest and true Valuation Bill—which was always thrown in their teeth when they approached this subject—and at the same time do useful service to local government throughout the country.

MR. TOMKINSON (Cheshire, Crewe) said the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dulwich had appeared as a critic of Liberal legislation and in the familiar character of a prophet of woe. For three or four years he had been engaged in that character and he really wondered that the hon. Gentleman had not by this time tired of the role. He could remember that in the early days of the tariff reform movement the hon. Member prophesied such an influx of cheap steel and iron to be dumped into this country at something like £2 a ton, that our industries would be almost wiped out. In various ways the hon. Gentleman had been constantly engaged in prophesying woes, "carrying panic to our friends and comfort to our foes," belittling our own country and extolling Germany and other protectionist countries in comparison with it. The hon. Member had said that the Government by its Budget, was placing enormous future burdens on the country without any attempt to provide for them, but for his own part he would submit in answer that there could be no better way of budgeting for the future and providing for liabilities than in paying off debt, and thereby reducing interest; and that had been done in the last three years to a far greater extent than at any previous time in the history of the country. The hon. Gentleman had gone on to touch upon the subject of a tax on manufactured articles, and he had skilfully avoided the challenge to deal with the question of a tax upon wheat, meat, and articles of dairy produce. It was very easy to talk about a tax upon manufactured articles, which was something like the vague phrase "broadening the basis of taxation." When they came to deal with the question of a tax on manufactured articles, the man did not live who could define what a manufactured article was.

Where was the so purely manufactured article that it was not useful in some of our industries? He would take a simple illustration. In the town of Nantwich in his own constituency, there was the tannery industry, and boot and shoe factories. The first question was: "What is leather? Is it a manufactured article or not?" The tanner said it was manufactured, and wanted protection. The boot and shoemaker said that would be the death blow to his industry. The South Wales tin, plate trade, which had been attended with such prosperity, depended on the importation of cheap German material. That most exquisitely manufactured article, the American sewing machine, was imported for the purpose of stitching boots or to sew on uppers, and it formed an absolutely essential part of the bootmaking industry. In regard to Germany, the fact of the protection which existed there was a proof of our manufacturing superiority. They could not compete with us. Other countries, in some cases, were obliged to protect themselves, or thought they were, in order to keep out our manufactured goods, because in spite of the cost of carriage and other things they knew that we could compete with them in their own markets. All this was a confession of their inferiority. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Worcestershire demanded that the Ministerialists should state their policy. Well, here was the Budget, which provided for the present year, and if it were true, as the hon. Member for Dulwich had said, that they had plunged into the vortex or gone over the cataract, then next year they would see how they stood. [Ironical OPPOSITION cheers.] That was another prophecy of woe. Hon. Gentlemen opposite would not have to provide for the Budget; the Liberal Government would have to provide for it; but if the prophecy came true, then from the party point of view it would be a great advantage to hon. Gentlemen opposite, and they would have no reason to complain. But he thought the Government and their supporters could take care of themselves, and they had sufficient confidence in the resources of the country to believe that if they maintained peace, if they were more sober and temperate, and if they maintained free trade, the natural increase of the country and of its revenue would be sufficient not only to provide for old-age pensions, but to increase and improve upon them, and it was in that belief that he heartily supported this Budget. There was one matter he wished to mention, and that was with reference to the statement of the hon. Member for South Hackney as to the enormous unclaimed balances lying in the banks. He was a director of one of the largest banks in England, and had some experience of the banking world, but he must confess his utter ignorance of any such balances. It was enormously exaggerated. He hardly thought they existed at all, and anyone who depended upon finding £100,000,000 of unclaimed deposits of which the country could lay hold, would find nothing but a mare's nest.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR (City of London): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has informed us that the Arabian Nights estimate of the unclaimed balances lying at our banks is not going to prove any great national asset in times of financial difficulty. But I am not sure that the hon. Gentleman, who was so able, though so brief, a critic of the hon. Member for Hackney, does not show the same happy optimism as that which characterised the speech of the hon. Member for Hackney. What does he tell us? He tells us that, if we only adhere to our present fiscal policy, he had not the smallest doubt that the natural growth of the revenue will enable us to pay for old-age pensions in the course of next year without recourse to any new taxation. The hon. Member may, and doubtless does, know a great deal about the unclaimed assets which are lying at the banks; but I do not think he can have studied very much the growth or decline of public revenue if he entertains so sanguine an estimate of what is going to happen next year on the present basis of taxation. Nor do I for one moment believe that the Prime Minister will express the same roseate view of next year's Budget as the hon. Gentleman looks forward to. I must confess, as far as I am concerned, to a considerable disappointment in the speeches which, so far, have come from the Treasury bench upon a financial position which every thinking man, whatever his view of the fiscal problem may be, must regard as a serious one. We have had three speeches from the front bench opposite. The speech of the Postmaster-General, which was delivered, first, seemed to be more appropriate to a discussion such as we have often had, and doubtless are often to have again, on the fiscal question, than to the Amendment before the House. The right hon. Gentleman dealt at length with the questions of Colonial preference and dumping. I do not think either of those questions is before the House on the present occasion. I hold strong views on both those questions, but they are not views which come into or ought to come into the present debate; for even if I did not believe in the great advantage of establishing some commercial bond with our Colonies, even if I did not think it necessary to safeguard the interests of this country against certain kinds of illegitimate competition, I should still believe that, in the present financial position of the country, a widening of the present basis of taxation was eminently desirable and necessary. Therefore, it is a wholly irrelevant issue to raise as to whether we on this side of the House think that, if the present basis of taxation were extended, we should be enabled to have, in addition to new sources of revenue, an opportunity to establish, on terms favourable to the free trade of this country, arrangements with our Colonies, or that we should be able to deal with illegitimate competition. If those facts are true, they are not raised by this Amendment. We are discussing a different but a not much less mportant issue—how you are going to deal with the enormous liabilities which we see immediately facing us, and whether you are going to deal with them on the basis of taxation which alone is the basis that the present Government apparently are prepared to accept. That issue was certainly not dealt with by the Postmaster-General. He delivered a speech which was either belated or prophetical and anticipatory, which might have been in order and appropriate last year or may be so next year, but is not in order or appropriate on the present occasion. He was followed from that bench by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I have a very high opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's abilities. He has been an acute and ardent critic of mine for many years. I have had to meet him across the floor of this House on all sorts of questions and on all sorts of occasions, and no man could have the opportunities which I have had of forming an opinion of the right hon. Gentleman's capacity without forming a very high opinion. But, frankly, I do not think the right hon. Gentleman since he has been Chancellor of the Exchequer has quite done himself justice. Partly, no doubt, that is due to the fact that he is in a somewhat difficult position. He is responsible for the Budget as every Member of the Cabinet is responsible; but he is not responsible for it in the ordinary way, or to the full extent to which ordinarily a Chancellor of the Exchequer is responsible. He did not frame it. Doubtless he approved it with the other Members of the Cabinet, but he was not engaged in the laborious work of thinking out all the details of it. Consequently, he comes to the House as the defender of another man's work rather than of his own. We ought to make full allowances for that position; but, even after doing so, I am bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman, considering the great and responsible position he now holds, has rather too clinging reminiscences of his happy time as a guerilla chief below the gangway, and he deals with these great national issues in the happy tone of humorous irresponsibility which amused, if it did not edify, us when he was an important Member of the Opposition below the gangway. Further, if I wanted to establish that criticism, I could do no better than to point to the sort of misrepresentation—I do not say it was very blamable, but I am not sure it was very worthy—in which the right hon. Gentleman indulged in regard to the speakers who preceded him. My hon. friend the Member for Windsor last night advanced a perfectly sound economic statement that in certain conditions of supply and demand the foreigner paid not only part, but the whole of the import tax, and he gave as an illustration a tax supposed to be put upon the small quantity of coal imported into this country. That was a perfectly sound economic doctrine illustrated by a perfectly apposite hypothesis. The Chancellor of the Exchequer jumps up and thanks my hon. friend for having made the only suggestion offered from this side of the House, and says he understands that the method by which the Opposition would raise the necessary funds for our great expenditure is by imposing a tax on coal imports from foreign countries. That is all very well as a passing joke, but it is not of much use in a serious discussion. If I may, with all respect, continue the same line of criticism, I thought the right hon. Gentleman, perhaps by ancient habit, dragged in too much discussion about the Education Act of 1902. I made so many speeches upon that Bill that I never, unless I am forced by the Parliamentary situation, go back upon that well-beaten track. Not so the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Next to myself, I think he made more speeches upon that Bill than any other Member. He could not resist going back upon it, and he made the extraordinary statement that that Act was the main cause of the growth of local rates in this country. It was nothing of the kind.

Mr. LLOYD-GEORGE: In the last ten years.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I entirely dissent from that. It is perfectly true that the improved education given under that Act at the will of the local authorities has increased the cost of education, but the giving of rate assistance to voluntary schools has not added to the burden on local authorities—it has diminished it. If the voluntary schools had been allowed slowly to starve out, which was the policy of hon. Gentlemen opposite, and had been replaced one by one as they disappeared by board schools, the burden on the ratepayers would then, indeed, have been augmented, and it would have been augmented, not because the Act of 1902 had been brought in, but because it had not been brought in. It is a widespread and complete delusion to suppose that the fact that voluntary schools were allowed to participate for certain educational purposes in a part of the rates was in itself, and apart from the general improvement in education, otherwise than an economy. The last speech delivered from the Treasury Bench was from the President of the Board of Trade. I will not say he dealt with the closely-reasoned and able speech of my hon. friend who sits near me. On the main issue raised by my hon. friend he made no reply at all. What he dealt with in a speech which certainly was not deficient in ability, but, naturally enough, under the circumstances, had rather a platform flavour about it, was not the main substance of my hon. friend's argument, but certain casual and side issues; and I have frankly to admit that I do not think he dealt with them either very fairly or very successfully. My hon. friend told the House that, in a very serious and, to use the Chancellor of the Exchequer's word, scientific book upon economic matters, a German author had pointed out that armaments, in the case of a successful war, might be made to pay, or more than to pay, their cost. The President of the Board of Trade thereupon informed the House that my hon. friend's opinion was that we ought to increase our armaments because they might be made a reproductive source of expenditure. That was not the point of my hon. friend's remark. My hon. friend neither felt nor expressed approval of this German view. The importance of the German view was this: If a scientific German, dealing with this question in absolutely cold-blooded fashion as a scientific doctor might deal with a disease, comes to the conclusion that expenditure on armaments cannot be put wholly to the debit side of the national account but must be regarded in part as a reproductive source of revenue, if that be a common and widespread view in Germany, the position of this country, which has to keep a position at sea and on land which makes it free from all danger of attack, is more than ever a difficult one, seeing that one of the greatest naval and military nations of the world takes quite a different view of naval and military expenditure from that which we take in this House and this country. But a greater and more extraordinary misrepresentation and misapprehension of my hon. friend's argument is to be found in the manner in which the Patent

Laws have been dealt with. My hon. friend had pointed out with unanswerable force that while the present Government are perpetually lecturing us about the doctrines of what they call free trade, when they come to practical legislation those doctrines are thrown to the winds: and he took as an illustration of his thesis the legislation of the late President of the Board of Trade in regard to patents. His argument was that by the legislation of the present Government the foreign owner of a patent may keep his monopoly in this country if he manufactures in this country. The President of the Board of Trade seemed to think that he lost his monopoly in this country and that part of that monopoly was handed over to the British manufacturer. It is not handed over to the British manufacturer. It remains where it is now, in the hands of the foreign manufacturer. It is quite true that the English, or British, workman may gain by the fact that the foreign manufacturer has got to bring his work over to this country if he means to keep his monopoly. That is a kind of argument more favoured among hon. Gentlemen on this side than on the opposite side of the House. They always talk as if the very last thing you ever have to consider in your legislation is whether you give, or do not give, employment to the working classes of this country. But, Sir, that is not all. It is manifest, as my hon. friend pointed out, though the President of the Board of Trade could not, or would not, see it, that cases may and do arise in which it is more costly for the foreign monopolist to manufacture in two places than in one place. If he desires to obtain the same profit for himself and the same consumption for his goods, he ought not to be obliged to transfer part of his works to a country in which he does not reside, and the result of compelling him to transfer is that the cost to the consumer will be augmented. I thought that the one thing that hon. Gentlemen opposite never tired of telling us was that the only thing you ever had to consider in making your legislative and fiscal arrangements was, not the employment of the working classes, but the cost to the consumer. And yet, as my hon. friend proved conclusively, both in theory and, by the illustration he gave, in practice there is not the smallest doubt that this compulsory transfer of a part of a foreign capitalist's capital from the foreign country to this country must end in an increase in the cost of production. [Cries of "No."] Must or may. Now, as I hear a hon. Gentleman below the gangway cheer with undisguised irony at the substitution of "may" for the word "must," I must withdraw the word "must." It is a word very seldom used in these economical discussions without having some exceptional case thrown in your teeth; and I prefer, therefore, to say that, while it cannot possibly diminish the cost to the consumer, in some cases it will increase it. [Cries of "May.]

MR. JOHN WARD (Stoke-on-Trent): In certain cases it may decrease the cost.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No. There the hon. Gentleman is, I think, in error; and for this reason, that if it suited the German manufacturer, or the foreign manufacturer, to manufacture in this country rather than in his own, the Patents Act of the right hon. Gentleman was wholly unnecessary. He would come here without any of that gentle compulsion which the free trade principles of the right hon. Gentleman permitted him to extend to this particular form of enterprise. After all, these arguments, which I have culled from the three Front Bench speeches opposite, and which touched some of the most important points raised by the respective speakers, are far and remotely removed from the very serious issues in question at the present time. These issues have been treated, and I do not complain of it, as merely party issues. It is perfectly fair for hon. Gentlemen, if they think it worth while, to discuss their own wonderful claims to national gratitude for the diminution of the National Debt. It is quite true that they usually grossly overstate them, and that under analysis they do not amount to very much. Nor do I quarrel with the various other partisan statements made on the other side. Plenty of partisan statements are made on this side—I do not say unfair or incorrect, but intended to throw discredit on those who now hold power and throw credit on those who held power a few years ago, or *vice versa*. I do not want to press that aspect of the question as it affects either side upon the attention of the House. I will, therefore, content myself with pointing out that we are now face to face in a very novel and exceptional manner with the immediate future of the financial necessities of the country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us yesterday that the difference between the two parties was that one wanted armaments and the other wanted social reform. Sir, that is a deplorable way of stating things. I believe that every party in this House wants social reform, and I am certain that no party in this House is so foolish as to desire to spend an unnecessary shilling on armaments. I have had practical experience of Cabinet Government for many years, and if hon. Gentlemen could overhear the discussions either in the present Cabinet, of which I know nothing—though I could guess a great deal—or of the Cabinets of which I was a Member, and of which I do know something, they would really know that this illusion that there is any party in this House who has a kind of abstract desire to throw a burden on the taxpayers of this country in respect of armaments to which they are not driven, by what they rightly or wrongly regard as irresistible logic, to think necessary for the safety of the country, is wholly groundless. They may be wrong. These questions of defence are very difficult. The questions of Army reform are of extraordinary difficulty. Even with regard to the Navy, which has never presented the same immense difficulties, there are constantly arising problems not easy of solution, in which sensible and impartial men may well come to different conclusions. But it will only mislead hon. Gentlemen in their own speculations and comments if they seriously think that any Chancellor of the Exchequer or responsible Government readily admits the expenditure of a single shilling on armaments, with all the necessary incidence of increased taxation, unpopularity, criticism in this House directed against successive Governments in turn, until they are driven by irresistible argument to the painful necessity of sanctioning that expenditure. The President of the Board of Trade told us that the present Government have produced great economies in the Army and Navy. I am sure that they have done their best in both, and have not spent a single shilling that they did not think necessary, and by their own admission there are a great many shillings they have not spent that they do think necessary, and that are going to be spent next year and the year after. I would earnestly ask the House not to be misled by the antithesis of the Chancellor of the Exchequer between the two sides when he said that the desire of one was in the direction of national well-being, while the other preferred the barren production of death-giving machines. We all want economy in military matters, and desire such expenditure as we can afford on matters of social reform. Therefore there is no difference on that point. The anxiety of the present situation arises from this—that, so far as I know, never in the history of the country until the present moment have we been face to face, not merely with remote possibilities, but with the actual and immediate necessities for a vast expenditure for which no provision is made or foreshadowed by the Government. We have said that, if this situation is to be faced, you will not be able to rely on your old sources of revenue; you must find new sources, or, in the technical phrase, broaden the basis of taxation. Hon. Gentlemen, not anxious to pursue this discussion on the issue which we are trying to put forward, but to place it on a footing more favourable to themselves, have put a series of questions as to the exact Budget that we should bring in if we were responsible for public finances, and they claim to have secured a triumph when they put the question whether we should be prepared to tax this or that article of food. Any men who looks at the position seriously knows that it is folly to ask what Budget a party would bring in that can have nothing to do with the national finances for the next three or four years, according to Gentlemen opposite, while they will not tell us what is to be their Budget next year. A Government which will not tell us the Budget of next year can hardly complain of us if we do not tell them a Budget which cannot be for three or four years and may be indefinitely postponed. Hon. Gentlemen may entertain the agreeable view that their tenure of power is going to be indefinitely prolonged, and in that case I at all events have no call to answer the question, for it is quite clear that I shall be in my grave before an answer is required. But I will answer a question which was put in tones of electoral triumph by the President of the Board of Trade. I will not refer to the past, either to his triumphs or his failures. He and I are fellow-sufferers, and have each other's reciprocal sympathy. He told us in his speech this afternoon that my hon. friend near me did not dare to touch the question of a tax on corn, because it would immediately produce a collision of opinion between the late Chancellor of the Exchequer and myself. That really is extremely absurd. It seems to be forgotten that I was a member of the Government which put a tax on corn, when the financial necessities of the country required it. And certainly, if I thought that the financial necessities of the country required it again, I should do again what I did in 1901, before, I may incidentally remark, the fiscal question arose at all. And, therefore, upon this subject of broadening the basis of taxation in connection with the taxation of foodstuffs, certainly, if the financial necessities of the country required it—which is the only thing we are discussing at this moment—I should no more shrink from doing it again than I shrank from doing it before. But, when the Pesident of the Board of Trade deduces as a corollary from that, that my friends and I are prepared to put a fresh burden upon the threadbare shoulders of the poor, let me remind him that I have over and over again stated that whatever be the new financial needs of the country which we see in front of us, at all events I shall not be a party, if I have anything to do with providing the new resources, to increasing the burden upon the working classes of this country. And when the right hon. Gentleman declares that our policy is one that is going to increase the burden upon the working classes of this country, he is bound, if he wishes to be fair, to say that it is no part of our policy and intentions that any additional proportionate burden shall be thrown on those on whose shoulders taxation may in certain circumstances be extremely heavy. Then what a curious thing it is that, while Members on that bench have been occupied in making these wholly unfounded charges against the alternative we propose, they have not attempted the smallest defence or explanation of what is the policy they themselves propose. The person who came nearest to saying what that policy was was the Postmaster-General. He said—"If we want more money, we shall reimpose the old taxes." What finance is this? You know you will want more money. The Prime Minister is not, I believe, going to deny to-night, certainly the Chancellor of the Exchequer never denied, that the additional money required next year cannot be short of £10,000,000. If the obligations of the country with regard to the Fleet and old-age pensions are carried out, how are you going to get your £10,000,000? You have taken a farthing off the sugar tax. I suppose you are going to put it on again. I am asking the Government to tell us their alternative. What is their alternative? Some Gentlemen on that Bench say: "Don't ask us about alternatives. You cannot ask that. We shall do more than meet the obligations that fall due this year. Leave next year and us to take care of itself and ourselves." I am sure the Prime Minister will not say that. I am not going to quote the views which he expressed last year. They are familiar to the House. He told us last year when we were not committed to an immediate old-age pensions scheme, that we must look at finance not by the year, but by some longer period. He cannot get up now and tell us that, now that we have got immediately before us the necessity of providing old-age pensions, we should restrict our gaze to the eight or nine months which separate us from the end of the financial year, having plunged into obligations which next year will amount to £10,000,000 more than all the obligations of this year, and in the year after most assuredly exceeding £10,000,000. He cannot deny that he has not contemplated the general outline of his new proposals, and that in dealing with the finances of the present year, we ought not to take some stock of the resources which are to meet these new obligations. I think the mistake the Government and the majority of the House are making is to regard our present position as normal. It is quite true that in ordinary times, when a Government has not got to face much more than the automatic growth of the Estimates, the Chancellor of the Exchequer may well be excused from dealing with any but the finance of the year for which he is budgeting. But when you are bringing forward Bills which are going immediately to cost you £6,000,000 so far as old-age pensions are concerned and which are certainly going to cost in the near future more than £6,000,000—a Gentleman below the gangway estimated the cost at £20,000,000, and this does not seem excessive in the light of the investigations of the Commissions who have examined it—and when the Government, for a reason they have never explained, have postponed the naval requirements of this year to the years that are to follow, this House is not face to face with a normal situation. The situation is absolutely abnormal. That is the situation which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has got to face. If he is not going to reimpose the tea duty and the sugar duty, and if he is going to remain, as the Postmaster-General stated, within the limits of our accustomed finance of the last few years, it can only be by an enormous increase of our direct taxation, which would horrify all those great masters of finance to whom hon. Gentlemen in other connections are always making appeal. What Mr. Gladstone and Sir Robert Peel would have thought of piling up the income-tax as they propose to pile it up, those acquainted with the financial history of the country may be able to explain to the House. I say that these proposals would have been regarded with horror by those gentlemen; and it is surely the irony of fate that those who profess to represent in this House the old financial traditions of the country, those who profess to carry out the teaching of Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Gladstone, should base their whole financial policy on principles which those great financial authorities would surely have regarded as nothing short of national disaster. I have not dwelt upon one great source of expenditure referred to in very able speeches on both sides of the House—local taxation. You have got your old-age pensions—you are pledged to it. I do not know how the Government stand with regard to local taxation. I understand that it is some day to be scientifically dealt with. The Chancellor of the Exchequer told us so. I suppose he is going to lay siege to that particular problem just as some general of the old school laid scientific siege to some place with elaborate caution and great expenditure of time, drawing parallels closer and closer to the attacked walls, and deferring the final assault until perhaps it could no longer be delivered. It is agreed on all hands that we have these new commitments with regard to old-age pensions and naval construction. It is more or less agreed that money must be found for local taxation. We say that in those circunstances you must look out for new sources of taxation. Hon. Gentlemen opposite say that the old sources are sufficient, to which we reply that the old sources are not sufficient unless you are going to use the income-tax and the death duties in a way which the authors of those taxes never contemplated, and in a way in which, in my opinion, they cannot be used, not merely without gross injustice to the few, but—what is far more important—serious detriment to the industrial interests of the many.

Mr. ASQUITH: I have listened, as I always do, with attention and respect to the right hon. Gentleman's speech. But I must profess myself to be in precisely the same state of mental bewilderment at the end of this debate as I was at the beginning in regard to the purpose or even the meaning of the Amendment which has been the nominal and ostensible subject of discussion. We are upon the Second Reading of the Finance Bill which is the proper and natural occasion for the Opposition to challenge, and, if they are so minded, to impeach the Budget of the year. Now, the Budget of the present year, whatever else may be said about it, has two main and dominating features. In the first place it proposes to set up, for the first time in this country, upon a modest scale, and subject to carefully guarded conditions, a system of old-age pensions. In the second place, after fully providing for the whole estimated cost which will fall upon the current financial year of that new system, it proposes to devote the remainder of the estimated surplus to the reduction by ¼d. of a duty which is admitted on all hands to be unique in this respect, that it is at one and the same time a tax upon one of the first necessities of life and upon the raw material of many most important industries. Those are the two main proposals of the Budget. The question I ask at the end of this debate, and which has never been answered from beginning to end by any Member of the Opposition, is this—Is either or are both of them attacked? If—and that is quite a conceivable position—if hon. Gentlemen and right hon. Gentlemen opposite think that the financial condition of the country is such that, however desirable in the abstract, the institution of old-age pensions might be itself at present premature and improvident—and some of them do think so, though they do not say so—then the proper course, the only manly and courageous step, is to vote against the Second Reading of the Old-Age Pensions Bill. If, on the other hand, no longer relegating old-age pensions to that dim and distant future in which they have been for the last fifteen years—a phantom and will-o'-the-wisp at election times but never attempted to be translated into a concrete form—if they think that that era is over and that the time has come for some honest and serious and practical attempt to deal with the matter, but that in those circumstances you ought not to part with any portion of the sugar duty, then they ought to vote against the Second Reading of this Bill, or, at all events, to move the omission of the clause which proposes the reduction of duty. But they have taken neither the one course nor the other. This Amendment expressly admits that old-age pensions are now or ought to be an item in the normal expenditure of the country. The Amendment, on the other hand, is absolutely silent as to the desirability of retaining the sugar duty, and it is one of those occasions when silence is as eloquent as speech. And let me here incidentally remark that the right hon. Gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer was very eloquent yesterday upon the wickedness of reducing indirect taxation at a moment when you are going to confer upon the poorer class of the population a new boon in the shape of old-age pensions. He even made it out to be inconsistent with some declaration of mine, to which I entirely adhere, that all classes of the community ought to contribute in the form of taxation to expenditure of this kind. But the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has told us—and I take note of the admission, and I contrast it with what was said by his colleague last night—that in any rearrangement of taxation on a broadened basis care will be taken that the proportionate burden to be laid on the shoulders of the working classes will not be increased. Well, you cannot have it both ways, and we shall note with interest, in the future development of a hypothetical character which is some day or other to see the light, how the ardent desire of one of these right hon. Gentlemen to see that the working classes in the shape of indirect taxation shall pay their share of all forms of national expenditure will harmonise with the promise of his Leader that in no case shall the burden upon the working classes be increased. This Amendment contents itself with a hollow and sounding generality about broadening the basis of taxation. If we could only agree—it is a very large "if"—as to the meaning of that term, I suppose there is no man on either side or in any quarter of this House who is not prepared to give at least an academic assent to the proposition that taxation ought to be broadened. Of course it ought. The broader taxation is, the more solid and secure is the edifice you build upon it. Yes, but what do you mean by broadening the basis of taxation? Not one ray of light has been shed upon the vexed and complicated question. And, for my part, I find it difficult to avoid a contrast between the mild and studied language of this Amendment and the coyness with which speaker after speaker has avoided developing any intelligible meaning in it—a contrast between the attitude of to-day and the fervid demonstrations which only a year ago we witnessed from those very same quarters on the subject of Colonial preference. What has become of Colonial preference? The Colonial Premiers are gone, it is true, but are they so soon forgotten? [OPPOSITION cries of "Oh."] The right hon.

Gentleman who has just sat down, speaking ostensibly in support of an Amendment for broadening the basis of taxation, occupied ten minutes or a quarter of an hour in a charming dialectical disquisition on the theory of monopoly as applied to patents—a very interesting topic in its proper time and place—and yet he did not give us one hint as to what he and his followers meant by the proposition they are putting forward—namely, how you are going to broaden the basis of taxation. We do not know to this day what are the new taxes to be imposed. We have not even got an answer to the question which I have put before, and which my right hon. friends have put in the course of this debate—Does it, or does it not, mean taxation of wheat, meat, dairy produce, and the necessaries of life? I repeat, by this Amendment the Budget is not attacked, old-age pensions are not repudiated, and nothing is said as to the manner or direction in which taxation is to be broadened. Now I will come to the one relevant point which, so far as I have been able to follow the arguments of right hon. Gentlemen opposite, has been made in the course of this discussion. It is said by implication if not expressly, "We do not attack the Budget of the year so far as it seeks to make provision for the necessities of the year; what we are attacking is your reckless improvidence in not taking stock of the future, in not facing the ultimate liabilities which your present policy will entail, and, above all, in not taking us into your confidence as to the manner in which you are going to meet them." Now, a phrase of mine has been quoted which I used last year, when I said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this House ought to budget, not for one year, but for years in advance. I entirely adhere to that phrase. What does it mean? What impression was it intended to convey, and did convey? Did anybody out of a madhouse ever suppose that a Chancellor of the Exchequer was going to get up here and twelve months in advance tell you how he was going to levy the taxation in his Budget of the next year—what he was going to put on the income-tax or take off it, what he was going to put on beer or sugar, or what not, or even how he was going to deal with the Sinking Fund? Anyone who has any acquaintance with public finance knows that that would be to court disaster, because all the acute intellects who are engaged in finance in this country would set themselves to work to defeat in advance the scheme you were about to put forward, and to secure that you should get no revenue from it of any sort or kind. But that is the imputation that is attributed to us, and which is considered a high crime and misdemeanour. Now, when I said that you must budget for the future, what I meant was this, that you must have before you a clear forecast of what are the lines and directions which your expenditure is going to take—expenditure upon national services and expenditure upon social reform; and before you make any experiment in the way of increasing that expenditure, such as we are making this year in the case of old-age pensions, you must have satisfied yourselves that the resources of the national finance would be equal to meeting in the future the new obligations that you are about to create. It is in that sense that you must budget for the future, and it is in that sense, and with the most complete recognition of the binding force of the obligation, that this Budget and the proposals it contains, have been introduced. But what have we done? I am amused to see the source from which the accusation comes, and in a moment I will ask one or two questions as to the antecedents of the Gentlemen who have constituted themselves my censors. I am accused of reckless and improvident finance, and an hon. Gentleman yesterday from the benches below the gangway asked me what I meant when I said last year that I was trying to lay the foundation for old-age pensions. I can answer both the charge and the question in the same breath. We have deliberately postponed dealing with this matter until we had laid what we conceived to be a solid financial foundation for the future. How have we laid it? In the first place, we have effected, I am glad to say, large economies during the last three years in the spending services of the country—but not economies so large as either my right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer or myself would like to see. But they were economies, and very substantial economies, and they are to be judged not merely by the actual cash diminution in the expenditure on the national services of the country, but by comparing them with the rate at which the increase of expenditure was going on in the years which immediately preceded our advent to office. That is the way in which we have sought to lay the foundation for the necessary expenditure on social reform. In the next place, during the time when I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, I had curtailed year by year until I had brought practically to an end the system of borrowing for what is called capital liability. In the third place, after all deductions, we have made an effort, unprecedented in the financial history of this or any other European country, to reduce the burden of the National Debt. The right hon. Gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer said the other night, and I think the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down repeated it, that our success in some respects was due to a series of accidents. Sir, those accidents are accidents which occur only when a Liberal Government is in power. The accidents are these, that in each of these years the surpluses of revenue over expenditure have been much larger than was expected, and have gone to the reduction of the Debt. Now what have those surpluses been due to?

MR. HICKS BEACH: To bad budgeting.

MR. ASQUITH: They were due to the fact that, by rigorous economy, my colleagues in charge of the great spending departments have in those years found themselves able to do with less money than was estimated by a reasonable forecast. The trade and prosperity of the country, of course, had their share in increasing the revenue. But it was also due, and particularly last year, to a readjustment of the income-tax upon elastic lines which led to a far larger yield than anyone had foreseen. Do you call that an accident? I do not call it an accident. When once you have put your taxation upon a sound foundation you are entitled to whatever extra revenue it brings you in. Let us see what the history of this old Sinking Fund has been in days gone by. The right hon. Gentlemen opposite came into office in 1895. The first complete financial year for which they were fully responsible was the year ending 31st March, 1897. There was then for the old Sinking Fund a realised surplus of £4,200,000. That ought automatically to have gone to the reduction of the National Debt. What became of that? Every penny of it was diverted from reduction of the Debt and went to pay for naval works. The very next year they had a realised surplus of £2,470,000, and again that was diverted from the reduction of the Debt, and applied to military expenditure. In 1899, £2,055,000 was diverted from the reduction of the National Debt, and went towards the needs of the Public Buildings Expenses Act. And this was done at a time when the Government were largely increasing the sums devoted out of taxation to Army and Navy purposes and were borrowing on the market for extra capital liabilities. What possible title have Gentlemen with such a record as that to taunt me with my exceptional good fortune, because I have left the old Sinking Fund alone, and allowed it to go to its proper purpose? These censors and critics of ours, who think they can taunt us effectively with reckless and improvident finance, finished up their pre-war taxation by reducing the permanent annual charge for the Debt from £25,000,000 to £23,000,000. The fixed charge for the reduction of the Debt for the last year we were in office was £29,500,000. Therefore £6,500,000 was spent out of the taxation—that is, the whole sum estimated as the cost of my right hon. friend's old-age pension scheme.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: Can the right hon. Gentleman complete his statement by saying what is the fixed Debt charge this year and the year we went out of office?

MR. ASQUITH: The last year the right hon. Gentlemen opposite were in office it was £28,000,000. I raised it in my first year of office to £28,500,000; in my second year I raised it to £29,500,000; while this year I took the amount I said I would for old-age pensions and I left the Debt charge at £28,000,000, having in the meantime reduced the capital Debt by £40,000,000, and the annual charge for the interest on the

Debt by £1,250,000. I am much obliged for the interruption. I have thought it necessary to go into these details in order that people may see who are the reckless and improvident financiers. No doubt it is galling to right hon. Gentlemen opposite to find that the promise—I am almost afraid to call it a proposal, but let us say the prospect—of old-age pensions, which was dangled by them before the eyes of the electorate for the best part of a dozen years, has now for the first time become an actual, concrete, legislative proposal which Parliament is going to pass into law. It is also galling to them to find that more than half of the sugar duty is to be relieved, for which, in their opinion, the only compensating taxation is a tax on corn and meat. These are, no doubt, galling facts, and may account for a good deal of the violent language and irrelevant argument introduced into this debate. When I ask the House to reject this absolutely unmeaning Amendment, and when I ask them instead to assent to the principle and provisions of the Budget, I do so on the grounds, as I have endeavoured to show and I think the debate has shown conclusively, that free-trade finance within the limits and upon the principles of free trade has given us a condition of financial stability upon which, without making any comparisons with other nations, we can fairly pride ourselves, and upon which, if we only pursue a fiscal policy on lines equally suited to the special exigencies of our national life, will enable us to meet, and more than meet, all the charges that lie before us.

Question put.

The House divided:—Ayes, 367; Noes, 124. (Division List No. 111.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Acland, Francis Dyke
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agar-Robartes, Hon. T. C. R.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Alden, Percy
Allen, A. Acland (Christchurch)
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Armstrong, W. C. Heaton
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Asquith, Rt.Hn.Herbert Henry
Astbury, John Meir
Atherley-Jones, L.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barker, John
Barnard, E. B.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Beck, A. Cecil
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Belloc, Hilaire Joseph Peter R.
Benn,Sir J.Williams(Devonp'rt
Benn,W.(T'w'r Hamlets,S.Geo.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Bethell,Sir J.H.(Essex,Romf'rd
Bethell, T. R. (Essex, Maldon)
Birrell, Rt. Hon. Augustine
Black, Arthur W.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Branch, James
Brigg, John
Bright, J. A.
Brocklehurst, W. B.
Brodie, H. C.
Brooke, Stopford
Brunner, J.F.L. (Lancs., Leigh)
Bryce, J. Annan
Buchanan, Thomas Ryburn
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton,Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Cameron, Robert
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Cawley, Sir Frederick
Chance, Frederick William
Channing, Sir Francis Allston
Cheetham, John Frederick
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston S.
Cleland, J. W.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Collins, Stephen (Lambeth)
Collins,Sir Wm.J.(S.Pancras,W
Compton-Rickett, Sir J.
Cooper, G. J.
Corbett,C H (Sussex,E.Grinst'd
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cotton, Sir H. J. S.
Cowan, W. H.
Cox, Harold
Craig, Herbert J. (Tynemouth)
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Crosfield, A. H.
Dalziel, James Henry
Davies,David(Montgomery Co.
Davies, Timothy (Fulham)
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson,W.H. (St.Pancras,N
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Dunn, A. Edward (Camborne)
Dunne,Major E.Martin(Walsall
Edwards, Clement (Denbigh)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Ellis, Rt. Hon. John Edward
Erskine, David C.
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Faber, G. H. (Boston)
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Ferguson, R. C. Munro
Fiennes, Hon. Eustace
Flynn, James Christopher
Furness, Sir Christopher
Gibb, James (Harrow)
Gladstone,Rt.Hn.Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew,W.
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Gooch, George Peabody (Bath)
Grant, Corrie
Grayson, Albert Victor
Greenwood, G. (Peterborough)
Greenwood, Hamar (York)
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Grove, Archibald
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill

Gulland, John W.
Gurdon, Rt Hn. Sir W. Brampton
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Haldane, Rt. Hon. Richard B.
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Rt Hn. L. (Rossendale
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Hardie, J. Keir (Merthyr Tydvil
Hardy, George A. (Suffolk)
Harmsworth, Cecil B. (Worc'r)
Harmsworth, R. L. (Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N. E.
Harwood, George
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hazleton, Richard
Hedges, A. Paget
Hemmerde, Edward George
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J. M. (Aberdeen, W.)
Henry, Charles S.
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hobart, Sir Robert
Hobhouse, Charles E. H.
Hodge, John
Holland, Sir William Henry
Holt, Richard Durning
Hope, John Deans (Fife, West)
Hope, W. Bateman (Somerset, N
Horniman, Emslie John
Horridge, Thomas Gardner
Howard, Hon. Geoffrey
Hudson, Walter
Hyde, Clarendon
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Isaacs, Rufus Daniel
Jackson, R. S.
Jacoby, Sir James Alfred
Jardine, Sir J.
Jenkins, J.
Johnson, W. (Nuneaton)
Jones, Sir D. Brynmor (Swansea
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kavanagh, Walter M.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Kincaid-Smith, Captain
King, Alfred John (Knutsford)
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamb, Edmund G. (Leominster
Lamb, Ernest H. (Rochester)
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lea, Hugh Cecil (St. Pancras, E.
Leese, Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lever, W. H (Cheshire, Wirral
Levy, Sir Maurice
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lupton, Arnold
Lyell, Charles Henry

Lynch, H. B.
Macdonald, J. R. (Leicester)
Macdonald, J. M. (Falkirk B'ghs
Mackarness, Frederic C.
Maclean, Donald
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, Sir C. B. (Leicester)
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
M'Micking, Major G.
Maddison, Frederick
Mallet, Charles E.
Manfield, Harry (Northants)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Mason, A. E. W. (Coventry)
Massie, J.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Molteno, Percy Alport
Mond, A.
Money, L. G. Chiozza
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morgan, G. Hay (Cornwall)
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray, Capt. Hn A. C. (Kincard.
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Napier, T. B.
Newnes, F. (Notts, Bassetlaw)
Nicholls, George
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
O'Donnell, C. J. (Walworth)
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon)
O'Malley, William
Parker, James (Halifax)
Partington, Oswald
Paulton, James Mellor
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, Sir W. D. (Colchester)
Pearson, W. H. M. (Suffolk, Eye)
Perks, Robert William
Philipps, J. Wynford (Pembroke
Philipps, Owen C. (Pembroke)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Pollard, Dr.
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Price, Robert John (Norfolk, E.)
Priestley, Arthur (Grantham)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Raphael, Herbert H.
Rea, Russell (Gloucester)
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'

Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Rees, J. D.
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Ridsdale, E. A.
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Robertson, Sir G. Scott (Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Robson, Sir William Snowdon
Roe, Sir Thomas
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter
Rutherford, V. H. (Brentford)
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)
Scarisbrick, T. T. L.
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Schwann, Sir C. E. (Manchester)
Scott, A. H. (Ashton under Lyne
Sears, J. E.
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Seely, Colonel
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shaw, Rt. Hon. T. (Hawick B.)
Sheehan, Daniel Daniel
Sherwell, Arthur James
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Smeaton, Donald Mackenzie
Snowden, P.
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanger, H. Y.
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stanley, Hn. A. Lyulph (Chesh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Stewart, Halley (Greenock)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Straus, B. S. (Mile End)
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Taylor, Austin (East Toxteth)
Tennant, Sir Edward (Salisbury
Tennant, H. J. (Berwickshire)
Thomas, Abel (Carmarthen, E.)
Thomas, Sir A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Thomasson, Franklin
Thompson, J. W. H. (Somerset, E
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Thorne, William (West Ham)
Tillett, Louis John
Tomkinson, James
Torrance, Sir A. M.
Toulmin, George
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Ure, Alexander
Verney, F. W.
Villiers, Ernest Amherst
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walters, John Tudor
Walton, Joseph
Ward, John (Stoke upon Trent)
Ward, W. Dudley (Southampt'n
Wardle, George J.
Waring, Walter

Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Wason, Rt. Hn. E (Clackmannan
Wason, John Cathcart (Orkney)
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry A.
Wedgwood, Josiah C.
Weir, James Galloway
Whitbread, Howard
White, Sir George (Norfolk)
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitehead, Rowland
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Williamson, A.
Wills, Arthur Walters
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, J. H. (Middlesbrough)
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh. N.)
Wilson, P. W. (St. Pancras, S.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)
Winfrey, R.
Wodehouse, Lord
Wood, T. M'Kinnon
Yoxall, James Henry

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Mr. Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

NOES.

Anson, Sir William Reynell
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Arnold-Forster, Rt. Hn. Hugh O.
Ashley, W. W.
Aubrey-Fletcher, Rt. Hn. Sir H.
Balcarres, Lord
Baldwin, Stanley
Balfour, RtHn. A. J. (City Lond.)
Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Banner, John S. Harmood-
Baring, Capt. Hn. G (Winchester
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Beckett, Hon. Gervase
Bignold, Sir Arthur
Bowles, G. Stewart
Bridgeman, W. Clive
Bull, Sir William James
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Butcher, Samuel Henry
Carlile, E. Hildred
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.
Castlereagh, Viscount
Cave, George
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord John P. Joicey-
Cecil, Lord R. (Marylebone, E.)
Chamberlain, RtHn. J. A. (Worc
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Clive, Percy Archer
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E
Collings, Rt. Hn. J. (Birmingh'm
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis (Antrim, S.
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.
Craik, Sir Henry
Cross, Alexander
Dalrymple, Viscount
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Du Cros, Arthur Philip
Faber, George Denison (York)
Faber, Capt. W. V. (Hants, W.)
Fardell, Sir T. George
Fell, Arthur
Gardner, Ernest
Gooch, Henry Cubitt (Peckham
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Gretton, John
Guinness, Walter Edward
Haddock, George B.
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'rd
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Harrison-Broadley, H. B.
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Helmsley, Viscount
Hill, Sir Clement
Hills, J. W.
Hope, James Fitzalan (Sheffield
Houston, Robert Paterson
Hunt, Rowland
Joynson-Hicks, William
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir John H.
Kerry, Earl of
Keswick, William
Kimber, Sir Henry
King, Sir Henry Seymour (Hull)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Law, Andrew Bonar (Dulwich)
Lee, Arthur H. (Hants, Fareham
Lockwood, Rt. Hn. Lt.-Col. A. R.
Long, Col. Charles W. (Evesham
Long, Rt. Hn. Walter (Dublin, S.
Lowe, Sir Francis William
Lyttelton, Rt. Hon. Alfred
MacCaw, William J. MacGeagh
M'Arthur, Charles
Magnus, Sir Philip
Marks, H. H. (Kent)
Mason, James F. (Windsor)
Meysey-Thompson, E. C.
Middlemore, John Throgmorton
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Morpeth, Viscount
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nicholson, Wm. G. (Petersfield)
Nield, Herbert
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens
Parker, Sir Gilbert (Gravesend)
Parkes, Ebenezer
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Percy, Earl
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Randles, Sir John Scurrah
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Ronaldshay, Earl of
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Salter, Arthur Clavell
Sandys, Lieut.-Col. Thos. Myles
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Scott, Sir S. (Marylebone, W
Sheffield, Sir Berkeley George D.
Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk)
Starkey, John R.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Univ.
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark
Thornton, Percy M.
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Valentia, Viscount
Walker, Col. W. H. (Lancashire)
Walrond, Hon. Lionel
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Williams, Col. R. (Dorset, W.)
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.)
Wolff, Gustav Wilhelm
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Younger, George

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Alexander Acland-Hood and Mr. Forster.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Monday, 15th June.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

SIR F. BANBURY (City of London) said he would like to know why this Bill was introduced, and why it was necessary to make alterations in the Friendly Societies Act of 1896. He had read the Bill as carefully as he could, and had come to the conclusion that with one or two exceptions there was not very much in it to find fault with. He was informed that the friendly societies, a very excellent body, were extremely desirous of introducing the Bill, but the House of

Commons existed to consider legislation, and because a certain section of the community wished to alter the law, it did not follow that the House of Commons ought to pass the alteration without knowing what it was they were passing. He thought that some explanation should be given of the Bill by its promoters. Clause 2 at once struck him as being rather peculiar. It said—

> "A person of or under one year of age may be admitted as a member of a registered society or branch, and accordingly in Section 36 of the principal Act (which relates to the membership of minors) the words 'but above one year of age' shall be repealed."

He had provided himself with a copy the principal Act of 1896, and he would endeavour to elucidate the various references in the Bill. In the principal Act he found that any person who was above one year of age might become a member of a friendly society. It seemed to him to be rather extraordinary that this Amendment should be put into the Bill, practically providing that a child a week old might become a member of a friendly society. There had been occasion to deprecate the bad practice of insuring infant children, which led, he would not say to infanticide, but to very great suspicion that something of that sort had taken place. He had talked with an official of the friendly societies in the Lobby the other day, and he had asked him to explain the clause. His answer was that other companies did it. He thought that of all the bad explanations he had ever heard that was one of the worst. He gathered that what the official meant was that because insurance companies insured children under one year of age, friendly societies were anxious to be put on the same footing. But that was putting the cart before the horse. He would suggest to the President of the Local Government Board that the proper course to pursue was to prevent the insurance companies from insuring anyone under one year of age, and in that way put the friendly societies and insurance companies on an equal footing. It was the wrong way to put them on an equal footing by lowering the infant age for friendly societies to the limit which at present obtained in insurance companies. It was a very important question in regard to insurance companies, but it did not touch the principle of this Bill. He thought they ought to have some explanation of the reason of this provision's being put into the Bill, and some assurance from the Government that an Amendment would be made in Committee. Clause 4 dealt with disputes, and said—

> "The expression 'dispute' includes any dispute arising on the question whether a member or person aggrieved is entitled to be or to continue to be a member, or to be reinstated as a member, but save as aforesaid in the case of a person who has ceased to be a member does not include any dispute other than a dispute on a question between him and the society or branch, or an officer thereof, which arose whilst he was a member, or arises out of his previous relation as a member of that society or branch."

It seemed to be an extremely complicated clause, and he did not really understand what it meant. "Dispute" was carefully defined in the main Act, and the method of settling a dispute was very excellent, and he did not follow why this very confused section should be added to the principal Act. Clause 7 added a new subsection to Section 87 of the principal Act. The principal Act laid down certain penalties if an official of a friendly society took the money or property of the society and devoted it to property to which it ought not to be devoted. There was a definition in the principal Act and in this Bill as to how the funds of a friendly society were to be invested, and there was a provision in the principal Act that if an official used these funds for a purpose which was unauthorised, certain penalties should accrue, but he was not to be convicted if he acted without intention to defraud. The Bill limited the power of investment of the funds of the society. If an energetic secretary invested the money in something outside the powers given under this Bill and under the principal Act, not with any intention to defraud, but with the idea that he was making a good investment, and the investment turned out wrong and the money was lost, no penalty would follow. That seemed to open a wide door to very harmful practices, and there should be some alteration in the clause. There was also the point of extending the investments of the society in paragraph 3 of subsection (a). On the whole he was inclined to think that was not a very good clause, but some good would result from passing it because friendly societies would be allowed to invest their money in the debenture and preference stock of English railways. He was not sure that it would not be for the good of property in this country if some of the friendly societies had a good deal of money in railways; they would not hear so much from hon. Members below the gangway of their desire to be taken fourteen miles for twopence or one penny and bicycles being carried free and other excellent suggestions which they thought shareholders of railway companies ought to carry out. He hoped they would have a considerable amount of support from the friendly societies if this clause passed. Therefore, though he was not at all sure, from the point of view of the friendly societies, that they were wise in desiring this, he did not in any kind of way wish to oppose it.

*MR. STAVELEY-HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford) said he welcomed the Bill, but there were some things in it on which he would like some information. He gladly noted paragraph (a) as a most useful addition to the five provisions of the principal Act, and, speaking for himself, with the experience he had had of friendly societies, though he quite agreed that there was a danger in insuring children, still if his memory served him aright, ever since the original Act of 1875, children of members had always been entitled to become members of the society at any age, even immediately after their birth. This was an extension to those whose parents were not members. He thought the investment clause in the Act of 1896 was sufficiently wide for all purposes and he could not quite see, though he fully appreciated what had fallen from the last speaker, that there was really any reason to extend the possibility of investment. He took exception to Clause 7 because it was an absolute alteration of the principles of the English law. He had always been brought up to understand that it was an axiom of English law that the onus of proof should be on the prosecution. In this clause and in the subsection on which the Government proposed to act he found the words "a person charged with such an offence shall not be convicted if he proves that he acted without intention to defraud." In every case tried in a criminal court in this country the onus of proof was upon the Crown. Why in this little Bill, which was a beneficial addition to beneficent Acts, were they going to put in a subsection which created a great exception to the ordinary principles of the criminal law of the country? As to the other matters with which the Bill dealt, with the exception of the investment clause, which he thought was sufficiently wide, he wished the Bill every success.

MR. C. E. PRICE (Edinburgh, Central) said there were just two points not mentioned in the Bill which were worthy of consideration when it was referred to Committee. One was with regard to investments of friendly societies in practically their own companies. Railway servants' societies invested their funds in the railway itself, and if it came to grief all the servants would be likely to suffer as the result of that investment. In all cases they should be compelled to invest in something outside their own particular company, and that would give them greater security that in the event of disturbance in the profitable working of the railway company, the servants would not suffer thereby. Another point was that he thought some provision should be made that all friendly societies should be subject to some audit. A great deal of unnecessary trouble and anxiety, as well as misery, had been caused by the fact that the accounts had not been audited by someone entirely outside the society. There would be greater security if there was an audit by a public accountant who was in the habit of asking for the production of books and seeing that funds were properly invested.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. HOBHOUSE, Bristol, E.) said the hon. Baronet was fully entitled to draw attention to the sections of the Bill, but he had made the most of the changes the Bill proposed to make, because they were in reality exceedingly simple. The original Bill of 1896 passed through the House with a very brief explanatory statement by Mr. Hanbury, and it was found to be so in accord with public opinion inside and outside the House that no Member on either side of the House thought it necessary to make any further allusion to the contents of the Bill. He hoped the Bill would pass through the Committee Stage without Amendment. The principal Act itself was taken as representing the opinion of friendly societies at the time, and, so far as he knew, that opinion upon the general merits of the working of the Bill had not changed. But certain difficulties had arisen in the working of the Act, and, consequently, it had been thought advisable to make the changes which now appeared in the Bill before the House. The hon. Baronet the Member for the City of London, had drawn attention to one or two changes and alterations about which he needed some explanation. The second section of the Bill was one to which he had drawn particular attention. The explanation was really very simple. As the law stood at the present time, members of friendly societies could insure their children in industrial assurance companies, but they could not insure them in friendly societies. The hon. Baronet appeared to be apprehensive that the extension of infantile insurance might lead to greater infantile mortality. He was quite sure that both the hon. Baronet and himself would be in accord in opposing any legislation which might have that result. He could reassure the House on that point, because very careful inquiries had been made and a well-known authority, Dr. Newman, had expressed the opinion that, so long as the insurance was confined to parents insuring their own children, no harm could possibly come. Therefore, there was no such danger as the hon. Baronet anticipated. The object of the alterations to Clause 4 was to try and keep the disputes between members of friendly societies out of the Law Courts and so to speak, within the domestic circle. He was sure that was an object which would have the approval of the hon. Baronet. Clause 4 was really intended to overrule certain decisions which had made the Act very difficult to work. Clause 7 was also intended to get over another legal decision in which it was held that under the corresponding provision of the Act of 1865, to render the treasurer of a friendly society liable for withholding or misapplying monies that came to his hands, it must be shown that he had been guilty of some fraud or misrepresentation. Very considerable difficulties had been experienced in bringing people to book in face of the decision to which he had referred. In order to get over that difficulty it was intended that in this particular instance the onus of proving that he had not acted fraudulently should rest on the defendant. This was no doubt a new departure, but it was a peculiar case, and he hoped the House would think it was satisfactorily met under these peculiar conditions. He trusted hon. Members would allow the Bill to go through without further opposition, all the more so because they proposed to refer the Bill to a Committee of the Whole House.

LORD BALCARRES (Lancashire, Chorley) said the Secretary to the Treasury was quite correct in saying that Mr. Hanbury's Bill went through the House almost *sub silentio*; the discussion was very brief indeed. With regard to Section 2 of the present Bill he would remind the Secretary to the Treasury that the discussion outside this House with regard to Section 36 of Mr. Hanbury's Bill was very considerable indeed. Those interested in this question ten or twelve years ago would recollect the great amount of controversy and newspaper correspondence which Section 36 produced, for there was a widespread feeling that there had been grave abuses in connection with the insurance of infants in arms. The Secretary to the Treasury proposed to revise that section to the extent of allowing any child to be insured in one of these friendly societies. He was not going to oppose this clause, but he thought it was only right to recall to the House the controversy which took place upon the point twelve years ago. It was never alleged then that infantile insurance led to infanticide or, if alleged, it was only in the rarest possible cases. It was very freely stated amongst all classes of society that this system of infantile insurance did undoubtedly produce what one might call a sense of consolation to the parents, and at that time the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children seriously held the view that the system, if not an actual inducement to carelessness, at any rate was some palliation of the result. That was what brought about Section 36. Anybody under this new Bill would be able to insure a child at the age of two or three days. He did not feel inclined to accept a parallel in this matter from other companies. Because other companies did it he did not admit that it was necessary that a similar right or privilege should be conferred upon friendly societies. Personally he would rather deprive existing companies of the right than extend what was considered ten or twelve years ago to be something which led to an abuse. He thought the hon. Member was wrong about the question of the parent. There was no limitation in this measure to the parent. Anybody, whether a member of a friendly society or not, would be entitled to insure a child and that privilege was not limited to the parents. The question of the parents or guardians was merely a further sub-section of Clause 36 which dealt not with infantile insurance but with minors. He thought it would be an advantage if these societies could have their accounts audited, but he hoped that no hard and fast rule would be drawn up on that point. There were many friendly societies which according to the strict canons laid down by chartered accountants were insolvent, but nevertheless they were fully competent to carry out the work for which they were established and possessed substantial assets which could not be shown by some of the companies under the Company laws. With regard to the railway companies which had been referred to, many of them were managed by extremely competent men, and it would be ridiculous to limit the investment of these funds except under the general limitations of the main Act by forbidding friendly societies to invest their savings in the great concern with which they were connected. No doubt, technically, this Bill was a Treasury Bill, and the Secretary to the Treasury was naturally the proper person to answer for it in the House of Commons. But he submitted that a change in the law of this character was one in regard to which they were entitled to ask the information and the advice which could only be given by a law officer of the Crown. The amendment of the law here proposed was an extraordinary method of getting over a decision of a Court. The principle was that a man was assumed to be innocent until he was proved to be guilty. The members of friendly societies had no right to come to Parliament and endeavour to get over a fundamental principle of our jurisprudence, and to say that a man was to be held guilty until he proved himself to be innocent. He thought this clause was not germane to the main purpose of this amending Act. This change of the law was far too serious a matter to be dealt with without careful consideration. It might be taken as a precedent in other directions. He hoped the Secretary to the Treasury would take careful counsel with the law officers as to whether it would not be in the interest of general jurisprudence, apart from the convenience of friendly societies, to omit Clause 7 in Committee. If that clause was seriously pressed, it would provoke considerable and long discussion.

Mr. WATT (Glasgow, College) desired to call attention to a point which he hoped the Secretary to the Treasury would consider when the Bill reached the Committee stage. Co-operative societies were registered under the Friendly Societies Acts, and one of the obligations imposed by these Acts was that the societies should send to the Chief Registrar balance sheets made up to within one month of 31st December each year. The co-operative societies found that a very unsuitable time for striking their balance sheets, and particularly so in Scotland, where they found that the end of September was the most suitable date.

Mr. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr. Caldwell): I do not think there is anything in the Bill about balance sheets.

Mr. WATT said he understood this was a Bill to alter the Friendly Societies Acts. He desired to point out one of the disadvantages of these Acts which might be remedied by the Bill. The Scottish co-operative societies struck their balances on 31st September, one reason for so doing being that the dividends might be paid to members at a time suitable for the paying of rents in November. Instead of striking second balance sheets, the co-operative societies, in order to meet the requirements of the Friendly Societies Acts sent to the Chief Registrar the balance sheets made up to 30th

September after adjusting them by the addition on one side of the purchases, and on the other side of the sales made up to 31st December. Every business man was aware that that was not a proper balance. He suggested that either the date for sending in these balance sheets should be altered so that the co-operative societies would not require to make up more than one balance sheet in the year, or that the Chief Registrar should insist that balance sheets which stood the investigation of chartered accountants should be sent in under the Friendly Societies Acts.

MR. GOULDING (Worcester) said he was a member of a great number of friendly societies, and he had received communications asking him to support this Bill. His observations, therefore, would not be hostile, but rather for the purpose of eliciting a little more information with reference to the measure. He understood that under the present law a member of a friendly society could insure his child above the age of one year, and that it was now proposed to give him the right to insure the child at birth. It was also proposed that a child might when born be made a member of a society. He wished to know whether that Amendment was limited to the parent of the child. He should like to know from the President of the Local Government Board how far this Bill had received the support of the great friendly societies.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I am assured that it is supported by all the great friendly societies.

MR. GOULDING said he was glad to hear that. It was proposed by Clause 3 to empower societies to invest funds "in any investment in which trustees are for the time being by law authorised to invest trust funds." He would rather see power given to invest funds in certain securities which were not trust securities. He could name securities which came under the Trustees Act in which a man of ordinary prudence would consider it unwise to invest funds. He hoped the House would have some more specific statement than had yet been given as to whether the friendly societies desired the wide scope in regard to investments which this provision was intended to give. He joined the noble Lord the Member for the Chorley Division in asking an explanation of Clause 7. Why was a change in the law in regard to misapplication of property contemplated? He believed that if this change were made the officials of friendly societies would have scope for negligence which it was absolutely undesirable to give them. He hoped they would receive from the Law Officers of the Crown the reasons for this far reaching change in the law.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG (Antrim, S.) asked whether the Committee Stage of this Bill was to be taken in the Whole House because it was one of first-class national importance, or because the arrangements with reference to the consignment of Bills to Committees upstairs had proved unsatisfactory. No one would maintain that this was a Bill of first-class importance, and he protested against the time of the House being occupied discussing it in Committee, when Bills which were really of very great national importance were sent to Committees upstairs, where the public outside, and the great majority of this House, heard practically nothing about them. When the rules relating to Standing Committees were passed last year he understood that Bills of first-class importance would be dealt with in Committee of the Whole House, while Bills of a non-contentious character would be sent to Committees upstairs. It seemed to him that the principle which undoubtedly led the House to acquiesce in the change in the system with reference to——

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr. CALDWELL): That is not in order on the Second Reading of this Bill.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG said he was stating that the hon. Member had adduced that as a reason for allowing the Bill to go for a Second Reading.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow.—(*Mr. Hobhouse.*)

PUBLIC HEALTH (MARKETS IN RURAL DISTRICTS) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

SIR F. BANBURY said that they ought to have some explanation of this Bill. So far as he understood it, the Bill provided that a rural district council might, with the consent of the Local Government Board, exercise any powers which a district council could do now in regard to establishing markets in a market hall or in the streets. He did not think that a rural district council should have power with the consent of the Local Government Board to do that which an urban district council could only do with the consent of the owners and ratepayers. He thought that in these days, when the rates were constantly increasing and when they all knew that people were carried away with the desire to have everything perfect in their district, while the money was to be found by other people, they were sometimes inclined to be more extravagant than was necessary. If he was correct in thinking that the clause was not very clear as to the necessity for obtaining the consent of the owners and ratepayers, would the President of the Local Government Board consent to an Amendment being inserted at the Committee stage to remedy that? If that were done any objection he had to the Bill would disappear.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG said that this was a Departmental Bill, and he would like the President of the Local Government Board to explain the necessity for it. As had been pointed out by the hon. Baronet, the Bill would expose rural ratepayers to very considerable expense, and some explanation should be given of what abuses existed or what danger to public health was likely to arise which necessitated the measure.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. JOHN BURNS, Battersea) said that the object of the Bill was to enable rural district councils to establish markets under almost the same conditions as town councils and urban district councils now had the power to do under the Public Health Act of 1875. Under Clause 166 of that Act town councils and urban district councils might provide a market place, construct a market house, acquire land and levy tolls for carrying on the market in their area. The town council could only do that by a three-fourths vote, and the urban district council must get the consent of the owners and ratepayers of the district before the market could be instituted. No direct powers existed which gave rural district councils the same power of acquiring land, borrowing money on a small scale, and instituting markets and regulating the markets after being instituted. Section 276 of the Public Health Act, however, enabled the Local Government Board to invest the rural district council with the powers which an urban district council now enjoyed; but it had been found impracticable to give the rural district council the power as to markets, because Section 166 of the Public Health Act was inapplicable to rural district councils and areas, and there was no machinery for getting in the rural districts the consent of the owners and ratepayers as was the case with urban district councils. Apart from that, it would probably be necessary to get consent of the owners and ratepayers of the whole district when the market was only required for a particular parish. What the Bill did was to substitute for the consent of the owners and ratepayers the consent of the Local Government Board, which would secure the interests of everybody. The hon. Member for South Antrim asked what was the necessity for the Bill. It was because in certain parts of the country the custom was, and in many cases the right was to hold markets on streets and squares of the villages and in small towns under conditions that very frequently led to insanitation, amounting at times to a nuisance. Rural district councils were under their present limited powers unable to spend money where it was the custom to hold markets or fairs, on paving the market place, forming gullies and keeping them clean and in a sanitary condition. It was in order to enable them to do all this that the Bill had been introduced. Representations in favour of the Bill had been made to the Local Government Board by the Board of Agriculture and by Members interested in the agricultural districts. It was said, quite truly, that it was not fair to have animals of all kinds on the streets and the market places unless the animals could be kept clean and in an advantageous condition to the people who sold them instead of being a nuisance to the villagers.

MR. RAWLINSON (Cambridge University) said that as he understood the Bill it apparently gave absolute power for the first time to a rural authority, without the consent of any ratepayer, but simply with the consent of the Local Government Board, to do a thing which urban authorities or town councils could not do without the consent of the ratepayers, viz., establish markets, which entailed not only building halls, but paving streets, and giving the power to charge rents for storage and for stallage. Where a market already existed and was run by a company as some of these country markets were, this Bill for the first time gave the rural district power to buy up the market company and gave the market company power to sell to the rural district council.

*MR. JOHN BURNS said the hon. Member would find that Section 166, to which he had referred, provided that in the establishment of any market no rights, powers, or privileges of any person were to be interfered with without his consent.

MR. RAWLINSON said there were two totally distinct powers, one which gave the rural district council power to erect markets where they did not exist, without the consent of the ratepayers, and to exact rents and tolls from anybody who came in to sell their produce, and the other which gave them power where a market already existed to buy that market without the consent of the ratepayers. The point he wished to make clear to the House was that this Bill gave a considerable extension of powers to the rural district council to act without the authority of the ratepayers.

MR. RENDALL (Gloucestershire, Thornbury) said his friend was making a mountain out of a mole hill. This Bill only referred to two or three small towns in the country, which were under the control of rural district councils.

SIR F. BANBURY said he would be obliged if the hon. Member would point out how the Bill was limited to two or three small towns. Every small town or village could under this Bill have markets established in them without their consent.

MR. RAWLINSON said the Bill applied to every rural district in the country.

MR. RENDALL admitted that that was so, but said it was not very likely that markets would be established at this time of day where they did not already exist. It only applied to such towns as Thornbury in Gloucestershire, and Axminster in Devonshire. For instance, in Thornbury there was a small market square used for the buying and selling of cattle. The collection of those cattle in that place was extremely inconvenient to the people. He had himself addressed meetings in that market place, and the cattle straying among the people caused a great deal of inconvenience. Then there was the more serious sanitary grievance which would be got rid of if this Bill was passed into law. He thanked the right hon. Gentleman for now having taken in hand this Bill, which was the result of a long agitation by three or four small places, and he hoped the House would assent to the Bill being read a second time so that the long-delayed promise of the Local Government Board might be carried out.

MR. COURTHOPE (Sussex, Rye) expressed the hope that his hon. friends would not persist in their opposition to this Bill. It would probably not apply to many places, yet it would certainly meet an agricultural want. It was supported unanimously by the agricultural community on that ground. The various agricultural societies had been most sympathetic in the matter, and for his part he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would not only secure the Second Reading but would be successful in placing the Bill upon the Statute-book.

MR. GOULDING said the speech of the President of the Local Government Board had been so conciliatory that, had the matter been left there, it would have been difficult for anyone to oppose this measure. But, fortunately, the hon. Member for the Thornbury Division had explained the true reason for the Bill, and had shown that it could be used in a most tyrannous manner. The country might be overtaxed and nobody knew what expenditure would be incurred. The Local Government Board was to be the only authority to be consulted, and, if that body consented, the people were to be rated for a market which was only wanted by a few fussy individuals. It was a most serious innovation. If it was clearly shown that people required a market, by all means let them have it, but let the right hon. Gentleman leave in the Bill the words, "with the consent of the ratepayers." Let the House consider for a moment what might occur. An election might take place in one of these districts without any particular issue having been raised. Some individuals might be successful in getting on to the council and in blarneying their colleagues into the idea that they ought to have a market; that it would cost the people nothing, that the landlord would have to pay the rate. But the members of the council had not any authority from their constituents to vote for such a proposal, yet under this Bill they would be able to carry it. The rural district council could set up an entirely new market, whether it was required or not. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would limit that provision by accepting in Committee the words: "with the consent of the ratepayers." He himself wanted to see people live in country districts and not be drawn into the towns, and the only way that that could be encouraged was by showing the people that they had full authority to govern the district in which they lived. There was no limit whatsoever to the rate which might be imposed for this market, no conditions were put down as to whether the people or the owners of property were to be consulted; everything was to be done by the Local Government Board in London, which was to decide as to the requirements of a locality, governed by the votes of a chance majority on the rural district council. There should be inserted in the Bill a specific provision that the ratepayers should be consulted and their consent obtained before such expenditure was incurred. From how many districts had complaints been made? The only complaint that had come was from Thornbury.

MR. RENDALL said he also mentioned Axminster in Devonshire.

MR. GOULDING said in that case it was perfectly clear that the Bill had been introduced on behalf of two rural district councils of England. Who could possibly say there was any desire for these markets? Where such markets were set up expense would be incurred by those who used them. There were a number of rural districts where the people living in the country came to the small towns and other places, where people congregated to sell their poultry and their butter and their produce generally without let or hindrance or inconvenience to the community. If these markets were set up these people would have to pay the rent or toll of the market. If the provision was inserted that the consent of the people must be obtained before these markets were set up the grievance of which he complained would be removed. Supposing markets did not at present exist, were they to be created? Were the district council to decide that they would buy the land and then just get the approval of the President of the Local Government Board whether the owners of the place or the inhabitants wished it or not? The right hon. Gentleman did not appreciate how far-reaching the Bill could be in inflicting great hardship on the people in a locality. The only safeguard which would secure fair play was that the ratepayers should be consulted. Here was a Radical Government, calling itself democratic, whose every single transaction was bureaucratic, and who did everything but trust the people. He was a Tory and a democrat, and he would trust the people to say whether they thought this thing should be done or not. They had had a promise that the Bill should not be sent upstairs, but discussed in the House of Commons, and he hoped there would be an Amendment put in providing that the consent of the ratepayers should be secured before either any market was bought or any steps taken to provide a market in a locality.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for To-morrow. — (*Mr. John Burns.*)

TELEGRAPH (CONSTRUCTION) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*MR. COURTHOPE, in moving that the Bill be read a second time that day six months, said that the Bill would do serious mischief to the rural districts. In order to make his reasons clear he would very briefly explain the steps which had led up to the Bill. The Telegraphs Act of 1863 gave power, subject to certain conditions and provisions, to the Postmaster-General to carry wires across land and over streets and buildings in boroughs and towns of not less than 30,000 inhabitants, and the Act of 1878 extended the powers to urban sanitary districts and included in the term "street," main roads, bridle-paths and private roads which were also public footpaths. So far he did not think there was any objection to the extension. They all agreed that the extension of telegraphic and telephonic communications was a good thing for the community, and that anything which promoted it should be supported. For that reason he had no fault to find with Clause 3 of the Bill now under discussion, which provided that where the Postmaster-General and the Railway and Canal Commissioners were satisfied that, owing to the refusal or failure of any occupier, owner, or lessor of any building, to give the necessary facilities, telegraphic communication could not be supplied except at unreasonable cost and under unreasonable conditions, steps might be taken without the consent of the person to establish the communication. The fault he found with the Bill was that it invested the Postmaster-General with powers with regard to the lopping and felling of trees. It proposed to extend to the rural districts the powers which at present only applied to towns and urban sanitary districts; and the clauses in the Acts of 1863 and 1878 which referred to streets would in future refer to country roads and lanes. In order to carry out those provisions with the least possible inconvenience to those constructing the lines the Postmaster-General sought very wide powers in the way of lopping trees and so on. The provisions with regard to the carrying of wires over land and buildings would, when applied to rural districts, enable the wires to cut off corners and to go straight across the curves of a bending road. In doing so they must inevitably come into contact with a great many trees that would not be touched under present conditions. The saving would be very small, but there would be a great risk of spoiling rural scenery and destroying fine avenues of trees which were the pride of the country neighbourhood. He did not suggest that the Bill sought to give power to cut the trees without some notice being given. Notice must be given to the owner or occupier of the land on which the trees were growing, but, unless within three weeks the owner or occupier gave a counter notice, the servants of the Postmaster-General might cut the trees down. If counter notice were given, then a difference would be held to have been set up between the Postmaster-General and the owner or occupier, and the affair would go to the County Court Judge or to various other officials to decide. There was a danger that the notice might not necessarily be given to the owner; it might be given to the occupier, who in the vast majority of cases was not the owner of the trees, had no power to touch them, and was under no obligation to forward notices concerning them. Notwithstanding that, the Postmaster-General might serve the notice on him, and, if he, by any chance, failed to inform his landlord that the notice had been received, the owner would have no opportunity of serving a notice of objection. The trees would be removed and a very great hardship would be inflicted on the owner. He feared that by default of notice of objections arising in this way, the engineers of the Post Office would have the power placed in their hands to use the axe on avenues of trees of great beauty. The owner might indeed be abroad when the Postmaster-General sent him the notice, and he might suddenly discover that it was too late to stop interference with his trees by taking the matter before the County Court. He did not want to obstruct the extension of telegraphic communcation. As a rule, by a little consideration and tact, a line could be taken through any avenue without damaging the trees and creating blots on the scenery, and he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would be able to foreshadow some Amendment to meet the point and secure that it should have consideration in Committee. The right hon. Gentleman knew as well as, and probably much better than he did, that the telegraph engineers were not the best judges of what was valued and effective scenery, and, if they were given this power, they would make the line as easy as possible from the point of view of construction and strike out every other consideration. It was with the object of securing some promise from the right hon. Gentleman that he moved the rejection.

Mr. GOULDING said that in seconding the Amendment he wanted to draw attention to Clause 4, which seemed to him to be very dangerous. An occupier who had a notice given to him might disregard it altogether, and it might not come to the knowledge of the owner that any notice had been sent. If notice was sent to the owner, he might be abroad at the time, and the twenty-one days might pass, and the trees be lopped or cut down without his knowledge or consent. Moreover, the Postmaster-General's servants were in no sense of the word woodmen, and they would not in any way treat the trees as they would be treated by the person to whom the property belonged. He, therefore, hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way to modify the clause in some respects so that that danger could not arise. Nobody desired the beauty of the country to be depreciated in any respect simply because by accident the notice was thrown on one side by the owner or was not brought to his notice when received by the occupier.

Amendment proposed—

"To leave out the word 'now,' and at the end of the Question to add the words 'upon this day six months.'"—(*Mr. Courthope.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

The POSTMASTER - GENERAL (Mr. Sydney Buxton, Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I am glad the principle of the Bill is not objected to, as I understand, namely, that the Post Office should have greater powers of obtaining wayleaves against unreasonable individuals. That is really the pith of the Bill. I agree with every single word the two hon. Members who have spoken have said, and when we get into Committee I will, with the greatest pleasure, accept any Amendment which meets the view I hold equally with them, that in erecting these telephone and telegraph poles we should preserve as far as we can the local amenities. I can assure hon. Members that there is no intention whatever on the part of the Post Office to ride roughshod over any local feeling or opinion or any individual interest in regard to this matter. What we have found in regard to telegraph and telephone poles is that, while the local authority have full power to force an unreasonable individual to meet their convenience and their views, the Government Department has no power whatever. The whole object of the Bill is this. Where there is really unreasonable obstruction on the part of an individual we shall be able to override it, always subject to an appeal, in some cases to a stipendiary magistrate, and in others to the Railway Commissioners. I think it is not unreasonable under these circumstances that a public department should be able to take action in regard to this matter. The question of the lopping of trees is a difficult one, I admit, because naturally very few people like their trees lopped. A lopped tree is not so pretty as a tree that is not lopped. But where wires have to be carried along a public road it is necessary in many cases to lop the branches of the trees, and this clause was drawn with care in order to protect the interests of the individual. As we have always done, we shall ask the individual to do it himself, and if he prefers that we should do it, it will be done at our cost, and not at his, and it will be done with the utmost moderation and in the best possible way. I quite see the point of the hon. Gentleman who moved the rejection of the Bill in regard to notice to the owner, and I agree with him that the owner ought to have proper notice. It might happen that during the twenty-one days to which he has referred the owner might be away, or a letter might miscarry or be delayed, and there might not be proper notice, though the owner was perfectly willing to do it in a proper way, and he might come back and find his trees lopped in a way he would not desire. I shall be very glad to meet the hon. Member in regard to some Amendment so as to make it clear that the owner himself will have a full opportunity of considering the matter and discussing it, I hope, in a friendly way, with the postal authorities. I am sorry to have to point out that we have had cases in which an individual simply obstructs the whole of the telephone or telegraph lines, and entirely declines to lop his trees, and at very great expense to the country we have had, in some cases at a cost of many hundreds of pounds, to move a whole telegraph line. I am willing to give the promise the hon. Member desires in regard to that Amendment and any others in regard to the Bill which can be shown really to be for the good of the public interest or for the protection of the rights of private individuals. I take great interest in the matter, and have on more than one occasion taken a considerable amount of trouble to obtain way-leaves another way in order to avoid places of beauty or to preserve the amenities of the locality, and the same interest and desire will actuate any successor of mine at the Post Office. I am very willing to give the promise the hon. Member desires, and I do not think there will be much difficulty in meeting his views for with every word the hon. Member said I cordially agree.

LORD BALCARRES said he was aware that the Postmaster-General was a lover of nature and an admirer of trees. His difficulty, however, was in regard not so much to the ideals and views of the Postmaster-General as to the attitude which had recently been adopted by one of his officials. He was not one of those who would stand in the way of a public improvement in a service of this character, but he had himself known cases where the Post Office authorities had alleged this very obstruction which had, when examined, proved to be quite unfounded, and where a little tact and judgment had solved the difficulty. The fact was that the official who had to work these telegraph and telephone wires was primarily a man of mechanical or engineering attainments, who could not be expected to show very much sympathy towards a line of trees overhanging a thoroughfare. There were cases where the lopping of trees was necessary, but an Amendment of the clause would not be of so much service. The best solution, apart from certain Amendments which the right hon. Gentleman had promised, was that by a system of rules issued in his name, the right hon. Gentleman should give instructions to his officials. Under Clause 4 as it stood, the Post Office authorities would be entitled to lop cedar trees in June, which would kill them at once, while in the case of other trees, switches could be cut off any day in the year without injury. The issue of rules subsidiary to the Act would obviate a number of difficulties which could not be met by Amendments to the Bill. He would not like to trust his timber to the average telegraph engineer.

MR. MITCHELL-THOMSON (Lanarkshire, N.W.) said the right hon. Gentleman had shown such a readiness to meet expressions of opinion which had been given that he felt sure if he made a utilitarian suggestion, it would receive careful consideration. He thought the definition clause as it stood might endanger some very important works. It read—

> "The expression hedge or bank is to include any ditch adjoining a hedge or bank as if it was part of the hedge or bank."

There were thousands of cases where important irrigation cuts ran alongside the road parallel with the hedge or bank, any interference with which would be necessarily fatal. It was not likely, but interference might take place through the stupidity of some local official. The Bill excepted canals used for purposes of navigation, and it was worth while to take into consideration the question of irrigation canals.

Sir F. BANBURY said he was sure the right hon. Gentleman would be the last person to desire to injure trees or interfere with rural amenities, but he would not always be at the Post Office, and they might have somebody there who did not share his views. Further, he could not overlook every case that arose, but must leave a large number of cases to be decided by his subordinate, who would probably take a wrong view of the situation. The ordinary official might say that it was necessary, in order to save money, to extend the wires in such and such a direction, and that might necessitate the destruction of a certain number of trees. He did not see that there was any appeal at all in this matter, because Clause 3 did not apply to the lopping of trees.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON: It is provided for in subsection 2 of Clause 4.

Sir F. BANBURY said he did not think that point was made very clear in the Bill. What was the real reason why it was necessary to bring in this Bill? The Post Office had got on all right for a good many years without it. It was sixteen years ago since the last Act was passed dealing with the subject, and the country had got on extremely well under that Act. He wished to know why it was necessary now to bring in a Bill giving extended powers to the Postmaster-General. Apparently the great power given to the Postmaster-General under the Act of 1892 in cities and towns having a population of 30,000 inhabitants was to be extended practically all over the country. He had heard no reason given why this should be done. On the contrary he saw on the Paper a very strong reason why it should not be done, and it was contained in the Amendment of the hon. Member for Preston. He presumed that at this stage it would not be in order to move a similar Amendment. The Amendment he alluded to was—

> "That it is undesirable to give larger powers to the Post Office until the House has been placed in possession of fuller information as to the financial results of the management of telegraphs and telephones by the Post Office."

He objected to the Second Reading of this Bill on the grounds stated in that Amendment.

Captain CRAIG (Down, E.) said he saw no reason for the Bill. It was sixteen years since a measure dealing with telegraphs was passed, and they had got on perfectly well since then without requiring another Bill. On 10th May, 1906, this or a similar Bill reached a First Reading, and on 12th December the order for a Second Reading was read, and the Bill withdrawn. On 14th February, 1907, it was again introduced, and on 29th June withdrawn. These facts spoke eloquently for the assumption that the Bill was not required, and that the Postmaster-General asked for powers which in his opinion he ought not to have and was hoping that the Bill would slip through the House. The whole secret of the introduction of the Bill seemed to be that the Postmaster-General should be allowed to do away with underground wires. It was clear that under the Bill proper notice would not be given to the owners of private property on which it was proposed that wires should be fixed. He suggested that the interests of such owners as might be abroad at the time the notices were served should be protected, and that they should be given the opportunity of preventing unsightly telegraph poles being fixed on their property. An owner might return to his estate and find that telegraph poles had been erected upon upon his property without any notice whatever from the Postmaster-General. He would like to know to what Committee the Bill was going to be referred. Was it to be sent upstairs like the Universities Bill where it would be hidden from public sight and where there would be no record of the proceedings?

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON said he would take into consideration the points to which his attention had been called by hon. Gentlemen opposite.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 172; Noes, 20. (Division List No. 112).

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Abraham, William (Rhondda)
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Baker, Sir John (Portsmouth)
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J.(Tyrone,N.)
Beale, W. P.
Bell, Richard
Bellairs, Carlyon
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Buxton, Rt.Hn.Sydney Charles
Byles, William Pollard
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton,Rt.Hn.RichardKnight
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H.(St.Pancras,N
Dillon, John
Dobson, Thomas W.
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Flynn, James Christopher
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Grant, Corrie
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Robert V.(Montrose)
Harmsworth, R L.(Caithn'ss-sh
Harvey, A. G. C. (Rochdale)
Harvey, W.E.(Derbyshire,N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arthur A.
Hedges, A. Paget
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Henderson, J.M.(Aberdeen,W)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon.,S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hodge, John
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jenkins, J.
Jones, Leif (Appleby)
Jones,William (Carnarvonshire
Jowett, F. W.
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Laidlaw, Robert
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex,Harwich
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lough, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeigh, Charles(Donegal,E.)
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
M'Laren, H. D. (Stafford, W.)
Maddison, Frederick
Marks, G.Croydon(Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morse, L. L.
Morton, Alpheus Cleophas
Murray,Capt.HnA C.(Kincard)
Murray, James (Aberdeen, E.)
Myer, Horatio
Newnes, Sir George (Swansea)
Nicholson, CharlesN.(Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norman, Sir Henry
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien,Kendal(Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Grady, J.
Parker, James (Halifax)
Pearce, Robert (Staffs, Leek)
Pearce, William (Limehouse)
Pearson, Sir W. D. (Colchester)
Pickersgill, Edward Hare
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W.E.B.(Bradford,E.)
Pullar, Sir Robert
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro')
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rendall, Athelstan
Richards, T. F.(Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Robertson,Sir G Scott(Bradf'rd
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Robinson, S.
Rogers, F. E. Newman
Rowlands, J.
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Schwann, C. Duncan (Hyde)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs. N. W.)
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Steadman, W. C.
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Stuart, James (Sunderland)
Sutherland, J. E.
Tennant, Sir Edward(Salisbury
Thomson,W.Mitchell- (Lanark)
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Tuke, Sir John Batty
Wadsworth, J.
Walker, H. De R. (Leicester)
Walsh, Stephen
Walton, Joseph
Waring, Walter
Waterlow, D. S.
Watt, Henry, A.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Whittaker, Sir Thomas Palmer
Wiles, Thomas
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

TELLERS FOR THE AYES—Master of Elibank and Mr. Herbert Lewis.

NOES.

Balcarres, Lord
Barrie, H. T.(Londonderry,N.)
Cave, George
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Charles Curtis(Antrim,S)
Craig,Captain James(Down,E.)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-

Fell, Arthur
Forster, Henry William
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hills, J. W.
Magnus, Sir Philip
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Nield, Herbert
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlington
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Rutherford, W. W. (Liverpool)
Stone, Sir Benjam

TELLERS FOR THE NOES—Sir Frederick Banbury and Mr. Goulding.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to a Standing Committee.

IRISH UNIVERSITIES [EXPENSES] REPORT.

Order read for further consideration of Resolution :—

"That, for the purposes of any Act of the present session to make further provision with respect to University education in Ireland, it is expedient to authorise the payment out of moneys provided by Parliament—(a) of the remuneration of the Secretary to the Commissioners, and of any persons appointed or employed by them, and of any Expenses incurred by the Commissioners in the execution of such Act; and (b) of grants for the purposes of either of the new Universities, or of the constituent colleges of the new University at Dublin, or of the governing bodies thereof."

MR. CHARLES CRAIG, in moving a proviso that no part of the moneys authorised to be spent by this Resolution should be used or applied for the purposes of denominational education, said that four or five weeks ago when the Irish Universities Bill, was under discussion, the Chief Secretary, in his First Reading speech, left hon. Members in every part of the House, with the exception of the Ulster Members, under the impression that the Universities proposed to be set up were to be not only absolutely academic Universities, but, as far as possible under the circumstances of Ireland, undenominational in their character. It was quite true, as the Chief Secretary had pointed out the previous day, that he mentioned that under the charter it would be possible to affiliate to such Universities, colleges like Magee and Maynooth. Since the First Reading speech of the right hon. Gentleman a great deal had happened. In the first place, the Bill with which this Resolution dealt had been sent upstairs to a Grand Committee, but very little had been heard of what had happened in the Committee-Room. He might point out that two Bills, non-contentious and comparatively unimportant, had since been sent to a Committee of the Whole House in direct contradiction to the understanding of last year as to the appointment of Standing Committees. In the Standing Committee on the Irish Universities Bill it had been the duty of the Ulster Members, including himself, to endeavour to safeguard the intersts of undenominational education in Ireland. He regretted to say that their efforts up till now had been entirely unsuccessful, and the Bill as it stood, and he was afraid as it would leave the Committee, would permit to grow up in Ireland a system of denominational and sectarian education of the most advanced type. His object in moving the Amendment was once more to draw the attention of the House to that cardinal fact in the Bill. If the British House of Commons said clearly and distinctly that it was prepared once and for all to set up in Ireland a University which in all respects answered to the general description of a purely sectarian and denominational University he had little more to say on the subject. He fully recognised the fact that it rested with the House to make up its mind to what he had indicated, and if so, all the protest he could make would have no effect on the Bill in the long run. However, he had still hopes that when hon. Members on the other side of the House fully realised what they were lending themselves to, and what effect the Bill would have in Ireland if passed, they might raise some feeble protest against the reversal of the policy they professed to have pursued for so many years. The ground of his argument was that, either by this sectarian and denominational Bill or directly or indirectly by means of a charter, the great Roman Catholic seminary of Maynooth would be incorporated in the Dublin University as soon as the present Royal University of Ireland was done away with and the new Dublin University set up. He did not know whether the House fully realised what that meant. Maynooth College, he might tell the House if they did not know it already, was a purely ecclesiastical institution where a large proportion, at any rate, of the persons who subsequently entered the Roman Catholic Church as priests received their education.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford) asked whether it was in order on the Report of a Resolution to discuss the merits of the Bill, or the merits of a draft charter which was before neither the House nor the Stending Committee.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr. CALDWELL, Lanarkshire, Mid.) said that the hon. Member was going rather widely into the Bill. The Resolution was simply an enabling one, while the application of the money would have to be dealt with and discussed subsequently in a Bill. He must refer to the Resolution or confine himself to his Amendment. To go into the details as the hon. Member was now doing was going beyond the scope of the Resolutionor Amendment.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG said he would endeavour to confine himself to the Amendment, but he thought it necessary for the purpose of convincing the House to show that if the Resolution was passed the money authorised would be used for denominational purposes, and that Maynooth College, which was a purely sectarian institution, would be incorporated as part of the Dublin University.

MR. JOHN REDMOND pointed out that there was nothing in the Bill about Maynooth or about the use of the money sanctioned by the Resolution for denominational purposes. If the hon. Gentleman man was in order he would be entitled to canvass the whole merits of the Bill.

*MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER said that the hon. Member was only entitled to deal with the Resolution as regarded the money in a general way, and not to anticipate a discussion which would be appropriate to the Bill.

SIR F. BANBURY, on the point of order, said that the reason for the Amendment was that the money to be voted should not be applied to any denominational purpose. As the hon. Member for Waterford had said, there was nothing in the Bill about Maynooth, and it was just because of that that the Amendment had been moved.

* MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The hon. Member must deal with the general question in the Resolution, and may combine with it the Amendment, that the money should not be applied for denominational purposes.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG said he would argue as generally as he could. If he could show that the inclusion of Maynooth or any denominational institutions like the numerous Roman Catholic Diocesan colleges which existed in Ireland, could be affiliated to either the University to be set up in Belfast or to the University in Dublin, and derive all the benefits from the money proposed to be granted by the Resolution, then, he submitted, he would have proved that this was setting up a denominational system of education. Maynooth College had almost as many students as the three Queen's Colleges to be incorporated by the Bill. The Chief Secretary informed them on the First Reading of the Bill that there were 760 students in the three Queen's Colleges, and there were 600 students in this one sectarian institution at Maynooth. He only took Maynooth because it happened to be the most striking example he could adduce. If Maynooth were affiliated, they would actually have a greater number of students in the affiliated institutions than there were in the parent University at Dublin. Not only did this proposed affiliation include the granting of degrees to the students of the affiliated colleges, but it also proposed to give to them the benefits of matriculated students of the University. If, therefore, Maynooth College were affiliated, its students would have practically the use of all the buildings, the libraries and the laboratories, of every part of the University, thus placing them to all intents and purposes on the same footing as the ordinary matriculated students of the University. Maynooth College was put up for the express purpose of students who were to become Roman Catholic priests, and Magee College for students who were to become clergy of the Presbyterian Church, and if these and similar sectarian institutions were to become practically part and parcel of the new University, then it could not be called by any other name than a denominational institution, and as such it would be contrary to the policy pursued in this country for many years, and especially and loudly advocated by hon. Gentlemen opposite, that no public money should be voted for the purpose of denominational education either in the elementary or higher branches. He did not know that he had any reason to hope that he might carry the Amendment, but for the reasons he had mentioned he thought it his duty to bring before the House of Commons once more the fact that they were setting up two Universities, one of which would be as denominational as, and the other, probably, more denominational than any other University on the face of the globe.

* SIR PHILIP MAGNUS (London University) said he was very glad to have the opportunity of seconding the Amendment, and he trusted the Government would be willing to accept it. There was nothing in it in any way contradictory to the declarations which were made by the Chief Secretary when introducing the Bill. He had always supported the Bill because he believed that it was intended to set up undenominational Universities in Ireland, and there was nothing in it to indicate that they would be of a denominational character. He, therefore, saw no reason whatever why the Government should not accept the Amendment. It would make it perfectly clear that no part of the money to be spent would be used for denominational purposes. He did not second the Amendment altogether in the same spirit in which it was moved. He had no reason to believe there was any intention on the part of the Chief Secretary to set up denominational Universities in Ireland; he accepted his word that they were to be thoroughly undenominational; and for that reason he trusted the Government would accept the Amendment. There was nothing in the Bill to suggest that Maynooth College would become an affiliated college to the University, but, even if it should ultimately become an affiliated college, he assumed it would only be affiliated in its arts faculty and not in its theological faculty. They would have something to say as to the terms on which any college or institution should be affiliated to the new University; and he hoped and believed they would be able to safeguard the undenominational character of the Universities; but he saw no reason, having regard to the distinct statements of the Chief Secretary, why the Government should hesitate for a moment to accept the Amendments proposed. If they accepted it, they would show distinctly that they confirmed the statement already made by the Chief Secretary; but, if they refused to accept it, it would be somewhat impossible for those who had hitherto supported the Bill to continue to do so to the same extent. They would suspect that all sorts of changes might be introduced in the charters which they would have no opportunity of discussing and which were not in the Bill. He, therefore, hoped the Government would accept the Amendment. He had every reason to believe the statement made by the Chief Secretary that these Universities were to be of a thoroughly undenominational character, and his faith in that statement was confirmed by the fact that the Universities contained no faculty for theology in connection with which the Maynooth or Magee Colleges could be affiliated.

Amendment proposed :—

In line 9, at end, to add the words ' Provided that no part of the moneys authorised by this Resolution shall be used or applied for the purposes of denominational education.' "—(*Mr. Charles Craig.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR DILLON (Mayo, E.) said he desired to emphasise the fact that the hon Member for London University had seconded the Amendment, as he said himself, in a spirit totally different from that in which it was moved, but at the same time he would venture to express his astonishment that the hon Gentleman had seconded it at all. He had been a constant attendant at the meetings of the Committee, he knew the character of the Bill, he had listened to the statements made by the Chief Secretary, and he admitted that neither in the charters nor in the Bill was there anything to which he objected on the ground of the use of public money for denominational purposes. Was it fair therefore to bring forward an Amendment of this character, absolutely without precedent, and insulting to the Chief Secretary in his absence, because he naturally and rightly supposed the Resolution would go through without any opposition.

MR CHARLES CRAIG said the right hon Gentleman knew perfectly well that the Amendment was on the Paper.

MR DILLON said that was so, but the Chief Secretary had no idea that any opposition would come from any other than Members who were determined, if they could, to wreck the Bill on its merits, and who up to this had not obtained any support of a serious character in their campaign against the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman was therefore entitled to treat a notice coming from that quarter as not of a very serious character. The hon. Member who seconded recognised that the Chief Secretary had given distinct pledges on the matter, and he said he trusted his word and had no fault to find with the discussion in Committee or with the text of the charters or of the Bill. Yet he said that if the Amendment were not accepted they would suspect all sorts of things. Was it fair or reasonable to treat a Minister in charge of a Bill in that way—to say they thoroughly trusted his word, that they had no fault to find with the Bill or with the discussion which had taken place in Committee, and still to say that if an Amendment, absolutely without parallel in the history of similar Resolutions, was not accepted by the Government, all kinds of suspicions would arise? Suspicions of what? Suspicions that the Chief Secretary would go back upon his word, suspicions that in the speeches they made on the First and Second Reading they were, in conspiracy with the Chief Secretary, concealing the purpose which they intended carrying into effect after the Bill had been passed by altering the charters? That was the only ground on which the Amendment had been supported. He thought they had some cause to resent it. The Amendment was part of the campaign to wreck the Bill.

*SIR PHILIP MAGNUS: Not on my part.

MR. DILLON said he had drawn the distinction between the mover and seconder of the Amendment because the hon. Member was friendly to the Bill and supported it; but the Amendment was grossly insulting to the Chief Secretary, and the Irish Party, because they had acted honourably by the House and meant all they said. The hon. Member in making a desperate effort to enlist the sympathies of hon. Members opposite had drawn an absolutely false picture of the effect of the Bill and the charter. Even if Maynooth were affiliated not a farthing of public money would go to its benefit. The only effect would be to put Maynooth in regard to the new University on exactly the same footing as it stood in regard to the Royal University to-day, a University which was in the enjoyment of public endowments, but nobody had found fault with the fact that the Maynooth students were at this moment enjoying the advantages of the Royal University in Ireland. But the affiliation of Maynooth had not been determined on in the Committee, and he did not believe it would be discussed except by hon. Gentlemen who discussed every point under the sun. All they asked was that the same liberty which they had given to the Universities of Birmingham, Liverpool, and London should be accorded to the new University of Dublin. Was it to be tolerated that an hon. Gentleman in the name of religious liberty should propose by this insulting and utterly unprecedented Amendment that this University should be subjected to restrictions of its liberty to which no modern University in this country was subjected? He was an advocate of liberty, and he would be no party to asking for any privilege which was not enjoyed to the fullest extent by the Universities of this country, and he thought the hon. Member would find that he was approaching an unsympathetic audience in imposing restrictions of this character. This was a wrecking Amendment, an Amendment of insult. He believed that if it were passed it would have no effect of any sort on the Bill; it was simply an Amendment designed for the purpose of insulting them.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: On a point of order. The hon. Member has used the word "insulting" on three separate occasions. He applied it twice to the Amendment and now he has applied it directly to me. I ask you if that is right.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER (Mr. CALDWELL): The use of the word "insulting" applied to the Amendment is in order. Used towards a Member of the House it would be rather out of order.

MR. DILLON: I withdraw and apologise as far as I used it towards the hon. Member. I retain it as regards the Amendment.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG: I am sure the House will allow me to say that in moving the Amendment I had no intention of insulting hon. Members below the gangway or any member of their Church.

MR. DILLON said he accepted the hon. Member's statement, but he adhered to his description of the Amendment. The hon. Member had no right to convey the entirely false impression that under the Bill and the charters as they stood it was possible to apply public money and use it for denominational institutions. It was absolutely untrue.

MR. CHARLES CRAIG said that under the Charter and under the Bill it was open to the governing body of the University to affiliate Maynooth to-morrow, and once Maynooth was affiliated it would get the advantage of the new University and necessarily the advantage of the money.

MR. DILLON said it would get, as affiliated, precisely the same advantage it now got in the Royal University, and not an atom more. It was absolutely false to suppose that if it were affiliated the Government would be using public money for the purpose of endowing denominational institutions any more than public money was now used for that purpose. The only advantage that could be offered would be the power to take degrees, and no man, he thought, would say that was using public money for the advantage of denominational institutions. What he desired particularly to impress upon the House was that neither under the charters nor under the Bill as it stood, was there a single privilege or liberty towards endowing or giving any advantage to a denominational college that was not enjoyed by all the Universities of this country. There was not a shadow of justification for this Amendment, which was one without precedent in his experience of the House, and he earnestly appealed to Members opposite to vote against it, remembering the spirit in which it was moved.

CAPTAIN CRAIG said he desired to reassure hon. Members below the gangway in one respect at all events. They had quite misconceived the idea of the Amendment. There was no mention of one denomination more than another. There was nothing in the Amendment which applied to one Church more than another. It was simply to carry out the promise made by the Chief Secretary that the Bill was undenominational. Why, therefore, should the House be asked to apply money for any other purpose than to carry out an undenominational system of University education in Ireland? That was the whole point. The hon. Member had tried to confuse the House. Hon. Members were strictly muzzled and dared not say a word, when they were asked whether they were in favour of undenominational education or not. The hon. Member twitted them with attacking the Chief Secretary in his absence. But the Chief Secretary had run away. Were they to go looking for him? The Amendment was on the Paper that morning, but this was the very part of the Bill the right hon. Gentleman himself did not like, and he had determined, therefore, to keep out of the discussion. He said the Bill was undenominational.

Would he vote, if he were present, for an Amendment which said that money was only to go towards undenominational teaching? He could not do that, and therefore had gone away, fearing that he would be in rather an awkward position. It was not their fault that he had gone. It was his duty to stay there and defend his position, which he could not do. It was a very simple Amendment. There was nothing complicated about it. Everyone could understand what it meant, and know exactly what he was going to vote for, and if he voted against the Amendment he was voting for denominational teaching in this University. No distinction was drawn in favour of and no privileges were claimed for Protestants above their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen. What they desired was to secure for the Roman Catholic laity the same education as they desired for the Protestant laity. What they feared was that all the money voted by the House of Commons would not be devoted towards the education of the laity whether Roman Catholic or Protestant in Ireland. If hon. Members below the gangway would declare themselves and say that they wanted the laity of their faith educated then they would clear the air. The Nationalist Party wanted a particular denominational education, not only in Ireland, but in England as well, in regard to its elementary branches, and therefore their attitude was one in favour of denominational education all through the higher grades of education. If the Resolution passed without this Amendment the money might be used in the way he had suggested. The laity were suffering from too much clericalism; they should allow themselves to be educated and then they could march in the light of day. There was a cloud of clericalism resting over all branches of education in Ireland, and it was clogging the advancement of the people. He was speaking with reference to all denominations in Ireland. All religions were pushing forward so much that there was too much of the clerical element. He could not conceive why any hon. Member should object to this Amendment. It was necessary to have this matter threshed out in the House of Commons, and not allow it to be hidden away in a Committee upstairs. The Opposition were now doing their best to secure undenominational teaching in Ireland. This Amendment afforded the House an opportunity not of granting a special favour but of affirming what the Chief Secretary for Ireland had said in the House.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. CHERRY, Liverpool, Exchange) said it occurred to him that the matters which had been discussed for the last half-hour were matters which ought not to be discussed at all at this stage, because they were distinctly matters for the Committee. This Amendment was of a very unusual character; it was almost unprecedented; he had not been able to find a single instance where any such Amendment had been added to a financial Resolution. Why was it being done now? What was the special reason for it? He could understand the attitude of the hon. Member for East Antrim, who was anxious to destroy the Bill and was consequently anxious to introduce an embarrassing addition to the financial Resolution, but he could not understand why the hon. Member for London University had seconded the Amendment. The hon. Member had given them very great assistance on the Committee upstairs; he was a true friend of the Bill and had shown himself most anxious that the business of the Committee should be facilitated as much as possible. The hon. Member had said there was nothing in the Amendment which was contradictory to the declaration of the Chief Secretary when he said that no portion of this money would be applied to denominational purposes in Ireland. That declaration was binding upon the Chief Secretary and the Government. It had not been suggested that the Government intended to introduce any clause or alter any clause so as to give the colleges dealt with a denominational character. He wished to point out that every penny of the money voted went to those colleges. The only other money covered by the Resolution was the expenses of the Commissioners, and that was necessary to put these two Universities on their legs and give them a start. It was utterly impossible that there could be any attempt to apply this money for denominational purposes. Maynooth, as the hon. Member for East Mayo had pointed out, would not get any grant of money under the Bill. The only advantage which the affiliated colleges or institutions would get was that residence within their walls would be accepted by the University as equivalent to residence and attendance upon lectures in one of the colleges of the University. That was really a burden rather than an advantage, because the institutions would have the expense of maintaining them and providing lectures for which no public grant of money whatever was made. Whether that was a foolish arrangement or not was not a question which should be discussed now. It might be discussed in Committee upstairs, or when the Bill came back to the House on Report. He asked the House to reject the Amendment as being unusual, unprecedented, and unnecessary.

Mr. RAWLINSON asked why the right hon. and learned Gentleman had called this an embarrassing Amendment.

Mr. CHERRY said that what he stated was that the hon. Gentleman who introduced it thought it was an embarrassing Amendment.

Mr. Cherry.

Mr. RAWLINSON asked why the Government did not accept it if it was not embarrassing. The Amendment was in identical terms with one handed in when the financial Resolution was before the Committee of the House. Directly the hon. Member got up to move it the closure was moved by a Member of the Government, so that the question was not discussed on the Committee Stage at all. If, as the Attorney-General for Ireland had suggested, there was really no harm in the Amendment, the Government ought to accept it at once. The point was that it should be made plain that no part of the money would be used for denominational teaching in Ireland. Rightly or wrongly a large number of people thought that the Bill would involve subsidising denominational teaching in Ireland. If it did not, why should the Government hesitate to accept the Amendment which put into exact parlance what the Attorney-General for Ireland said was the intention of the Government? On Thursday morning *The Times* made the announcement that an arrangement had been come to by the Government by which Maynooth should be affiliated with Dublin University, and the hon. and learned Gentleman had not contradicted that. Assuming that such an arrangement existed, they had this position—that it was quite conceivable that the affiliated colleges would have voting power and all the privileges of matriculated students in the Universities. The religious question over here was not in such an acute stage as in Ireland, and if a member of one denomination had voting power in the London University, or any of the other great English Universities, it was exceedingly unlikely that it would be used for denominational purposes.

Mr. HOLT (Northumberland, Hexham) asked whether the hon. and learned Gentleman suggested that Oxford and

Cambridge were free from religious influences.

MR. RAWLINSON said he was perfectly correct in stating that there had not been the slightest religious difficulty during years past in Oxford, Cambridge, or London, and, so far from their being controlled in any way at all by one denomination, he maintained that there had been absolute freedom for the member of any denomination to come into these Universities. The argument of the hon. Member for East Mayo was that the English Universities were on an undenominational basis. He thought the Government had given short shrift to hon. Members who objected to public funds being devoted to the formation of denominational Universities in Ireland.

MR. ADKINS(Lancashire, Middleton) hoped that after the statement of the Attorney-General for Ireland the hon. Member would not press his Amendment. He understood his right hon. friend to say that the Government undertook that no money would be spent on denominational education under this Bill. If that was intended to include also what might be done under the charter, then those who thought that these Universities should not be devoted to the promotion of denominational education out of public funds might be satisfied. He should vote for the Government without hesitation.

SIR F. BANBURY said that it was a very serious question. The answer given by the Attorney-General for Ireland was most unsatisfactory. It was that this question should be considered in Committee; but the Committee consisted of only seventy or eighty Members, whereas at the present moment it was in the power of the whole House to decide whether this money should or should not be devoted to denominational purposes. The right hon. Gentleman had said that there was no clause in the Bill which gave a denominational character to the education to be provided in the Universities; but there was no guarantee that such a clause might not be introduced in Committee later on. At the present moment they were the guardians of the taxpayers' money, and they were deciding to what purposes this sum of money was to be devoted. If the Amendment was carried they would decide that the money should not be devoted to any denominational purpose. If the Chief Secretary, the Attorney-General for Ireland, and the hon. Gentleman opposite desired what they said they desired, why did not the Chief Secretary accept the Amendment? If the Chief Secretary did not accept the Amendment, he asked the hon. Gentleman opposite how he could with any decency refuse to vote for it. During the last four years they had taken every possible means to deprive education in England of any sectarian character, and English taxpayers would have to provide part of the money now to be voted; yet the only reasons why hon. Gentlemen opposite refused to accept the plain and simple Amendment which defined their own desires was that there was an understanding between the Chief Secretary and hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, and that the Nonconformist consciences were rather desirous of shutting their eyes in order to support the Government. Under these circumstances he would have great pleasure in supporting the Amendment, and he would look with interest to see how those who called themselves Nonconformists voted upon it.

MR. CHERRY said that he understood, as he believed all the House understood, that the pledge which his right hon. friend the Chief Secretary gave on a previous occasion applied both to the Charter and to the Bill, both to the colleges and to the University itself. There was no intention in the remotest degree on the part of the Government to violate that pledge.

Question put.

The House divided :—Ayes, 22 ; Noes, 149. (Division List No. 113.)

AYES.

Banbury, Sir Frederick George
Barrie, H. T. (Londonderry, N.)
Beach, Hn. Michael Hugh Hicks
Burnyeat, W. J. D.
Coates, Major E. F. (Lewisham)
Cochrane, Non. Thos. H. A. E.
Corbett, C H (Sussex, E. Grinst'd
Courthope, G. Loyd
Craig, Captain James (Down, E.)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Forster, Henry William
Hamilton, Marquess of
Hazel, Dr. A. E.
Hedges, A. Paget
Lane-Fox, G. R.
Morrison-Bell, Captain
Rawlinson, John Frederick Peel
Robinson, S.
Staveley-Hill, Henry (Staff'sh.)
Thomson, W. Mitchell- (Lanark)
Warde, Col. C. E. (Kent, Mid)
Younger, George

Tellers for the Ayes—Mr. Charles Craig and Sir Philip Magnus.

NOES.

Abraham, William (Cork, N.E.)
Adkins, W. Ryland D.
Agnew, George William
Ainsworth, John Stirling
Allen, Charles P. (Stroud)
Armitage, R.
Balfour, Robert (Lanark)
Barnes, G. N.
Barran, Rowland Hirst
Barry, Redmond J. (Tyrone, N.)
Beale, W. P.
Bennett, E. N.
Berridge, T. H. D.
Boland, John
Boulton, A. C. F.
Bowerman, C. W.
Bramsdon, T. A.
Brigg, John
Brodie, H. C.
Burns, Rt. Hon. John
Burt, Rt. Hon. Thomas
Carr-Gomm, H. W.
Causton, Rt. Hn. Richard Knight
Chance, Frederick William
Cherry, Rt. Hon. R. R.
Clough, William
Clynes, J. R.
Cornwall, Sir Edwin A.
Cremer, Sir William Randal
Devlin, Joseph
Dewar, Sir J. A. (Inverness-sh.)
Dickinson, W. H. (St. Pancras, N
Dillon, John
Duckworth, James
Duncan, C. (Barrow-in-Furness
Duncan, J. H. (York, Otley)
Edwards, Enoch (Hanley)
Essex, R. W.
Esslemont, George Birnie
Evans, Sir Samuel T.
Everett, R. Lacey
Fenwick, Charles
Ferens, T. R.
Flynn, James Christopher
Gladstone, Rt. Hn Herbert John
Glen-Coats, Sir T. (Renfrew, W.)
Glover, Thomas
Goddard, Sir Daniel Ford
Goulding, Edward Alfred
Grant, Corrie
Grey, Rt. Hon. Sir Edward
Gulland, John W.
Gwynn, Stephen Lucius
Hall, Frederick
Harcourt, Robert V. (Montrose)
Harvey, A. G. C (Rochdale)
Harvey, W. E. (Derbyshire, N.E.
Haslam, James (Derbyshire)
Haslam, Lewis (Monmouth)
Haworth, Arther A.
Henderson, Arthur (Durham)
Herbert, Col. Sir Ivor (Mon., S.)
Herbert, T. Arnold (Wycombe)
Higham, John Sharp
Hills, J. W.
Hodge, John
Holt, Richard Durning
Horniman, Emslie John
Hudson, Walter
Idris, T. H. W.
Illingworth, Percy H.
Jones, William (Carnarvonshire
Kearley, Hudson E.
Kekewich, Sir George
Kettle, Thomas Michael
Lambert, George
Lamont, Norman
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Lehmann, R. C.
Lever, A. Levy (Essex, Harwich
Lewis, John Herbert
Lloyd-George, Rt. Hon. David
Lyell, Charles Henry
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Macpherson, J. T.
MacVeigh, Charles (Donegal, E
M'Crae, George
M'Killop, W.
Maddison, Frederick
Marks, G. Croydon (Launceston)
Marnham, F. J.
Micklem, Nathaniel
Middlebrook, William
Montgomery, H. G.
Mooney, J. J.
Morrell, Philip
Morse, L. L.
Murray, Capt. Hn A C. (Kincard)
Myer, Horatio
Nicholson, Charles N. (Doncast'r
Nolan, Joseph
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Nuttall, Harry
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Mid
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
O'Connor, John (Kildare, N.)
Parker, James (Halifax)
Ponsonby, Arthur A. W. H.
Price, C. E. (Edinb'gh, Central)
Priestley, W. E. B. (Bradford, E.)
Radford, G. H.
Rea, Walter Russell (Scarboro'
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Rendall, Athelstan)
Richards, T. F. (Wolverh'mpt'n
Richardson, A.
Robertson, J. M. (Tyneside)
Roe, Sir Thomas
Samuel, Herbert L. (Cleveland)
Seaverns, J. H.
Seddon, J.
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Shipman, Dr. John G.
Silcock, Thomas Ball
Simon, John Allsebrook
Sinclair, Rt. Hon. John
Spicer, Sir Albert
Stanley, Albert (Staffs, N. W.)
Stewart-Smith, D. (Kendal)
Strachey, Sir Edward
Strauss, E. A. (Abingdon)
Summerbell, T.
Sutherland, J. E.
Thorne, G. R. (Wolverhampton
Tomkinson, James
Toulmin, George
Verney, F. W.
Wadsworth, J.
Walsh, Stepehn
Waring, Walter
Watt, Henry A.
White, J. D. (Dumbartonshire)
Whitley, John Henry (Halifax)
Williamson, A.
Wilson, Hon. G. G. (Hull, W.)
Wilson, Henry J. (York, W. R.)
Wilson, W. T. (Westhoughton)

Tellers for the Noes—Sir Joseph Pease and Master of Elibank.

Resolution agreed to.

Adjourned at twenty-nine minutes after Eleven o'clock.

[APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

PUBLIC BILLS

DEALT WITH IN VOLUME CLXXXIX.

Those marked thus * are Government Bills. The figures in parentheses in the last column refer to the page in this volume. "[H.L.]" following title indicates that the Bill originated in the House of Lords.

(A.) HOUSE OF LORDS.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
*Agricultural Holdings [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Committee 26th May (895) Report 27th May (1061) Read 3ª and passed 1st June (1500)
Assizes & Quarter Sessions [H.L.]	*Lord Alverstone*	Read 1º 26th May (894) Read 2º 27th May (1056)
*Companies [H.L.]	*Lord Hamilton of Dalzell*	Read 1ª 25th May (688) Read 2ª 1st June (1499)
*County Courts [H.L.]	*Lord Loreburn*	Read 3ª and passed 20th May (258)
Criminal Appeal Amendment [H.L.]	*Lord Alverstone*	Read 1ª 1st June (1506)
Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act Amendment Bill [H.L.]	*Lord Lovat*	Committee 26th May (897)
*Evicted Tenants (Ireland) [H.L.]	*Earl of Crewe*	Read 1ª 1st June (1506)
Importation of Plumage [H.L.]	*Lord Avebury*	Read 2ª 19th May (3)
*Post Office Sites	*Earl of Granard*	Read 1ª 19th May (3) Read 2ª 1st June (1499)
*Prosecution of Offences (Amendment) [H.L.]	*Lord Loreburn*	Read 2ª 21st May (460) Committee Report 26th May (911) Read 3ª and passed 27th May (1061)

(A.) House of Lords—*continued.*

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Registration [H.L.]	*Lord Alverstone*	Committee Report 26th May (911) Read 3ª and passed 27th May (1061)
*Small Holdings & Allotments [H.L.]	*Earl Carrington*	Committee Report 26th May (896) Read 3ª and passed 1st June (1501)
*Statute Law Revision [H.L.]	*Lord Loreburn*	Read 2ª 20th May (257)
Thrift and Credit Banks [H.L.]	*Lord Wenlock*	Read 1ª 25th May (688)
Weekly Rest-Day	*Viscount Hill*	Read 1ª 19th May (3)

(B.) House of Commons.

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Access to Mountains	*Mr. Trevelyan*	Bill withdrawn 29th May (1439)
Coal Mines (Checkweighers)	*Sir W. Foster*	Bill withdrawn 29th May (1437)
Commons	*Sir J. Brunner*	Second Reading adjourned 29th May (1439)
*Contempt of Court	*Mr. Cherry*	Read 1º 21st May (521)
Coroners (Ireland)	*Mr. Ffrench*	Read 2º 20th May (408)
*Elementary Education (England and Wales)	*Mr. McKenna*	Second Reading 19th May (91) Read 2º 20th May (312)
*Finance	*Mr. Lloyd-George*	Read 1º 26th May (1029) Second Reading 1st June (1575) Read 2º 2nd June (1731)
*Friendly Societies	*Mr. Runciman*	Read 2º 2nd June (1796)
Government of Scotland	*Mr. Pirie*	Read 1º 26th May (968)
Liquor Traffic (Local Option) (Scotland)	*Mr. Cameron Corbett*	Read 2º 22nd May (617)
Local Registration of Title (Ireland) (Amendment)	*Mr. Muldoon*	Read 1º 20th May (311) Read 2º 27th May (1224)

(B.) HOUSE OF COMMONS—*continued.*

Title of Bill.	Brought in by	Progress.
Money Lenders	*Mr. Atherley-Jones*	Read 1° 26th May (968)
Municipal Elections	*Mr. Cleland*	Read 2° 29th May (1471)
*Navigation Works (Ireland)	*Mr. T. W. Russell*	Read 1° 28th May (1294)
*Old-Age Pensions	*Mr. Lloyd-George*	Read 1° 28th May (1395)
Patents and Designs [H.L.]	*Mr. Kearley*	Read 1° 25th May (776)
Payment of Rates	*Mr. J. Mason*	Read 1° 26th May (968)
Poor Law Amendment (Scotland)	*Captain Waring*	Read 1° 21st May (521)
*Prevention of Crime	*Mr. Gladstone*	Read 1° 27th May (1121)
Public-houses (Extension of Facilities)	*Mr. W. Rutherford*	Read 1° 2nd June (1729)
*Public Health (Markets in Rural Places)	*Mr. Burns*	Read 2° 2nd June (1807)
Public Health (Sewers and Drains)	*Mr. Vivian*	Read 1° 26th May (968)
Public Rights of Way	*Mr. Winfrey*	Read 2° 29th May (1405)
Small Holdings and Allotments (Scotland) [H.L]	*Mr. Mitchell-Thomson*	Read 1° 25th May (776)
*Telegraph (Construction)	*Mr. Buxton*	Read 2° 2nd June (1813)
*Whale Fisheries (Ireland)	*Mr. T. W. Russell*	Read 1° 28th May (1293)

APPENDIX II.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, SESSION 1908.

List of Rules, Orders, &c., which have been presented during the Session, and are required by Statute to lie for an appointed number of Days upon the Table of the House.

[*In Continuation of List given in previous Volume.*]

Title of Paper.	Date from which the Period runs.	Period to lie upon the Table.
University of London Act, 1898,—Copy of Amendment of Statutes 4, 26, 120, and 127 of the Statutes of the University of London, and of Statute 11 of the Statutes for the management of University College, London [61 and 62 Vic., c. 62, s. 5 (1)]	22 May	40 days
Shop Hours Act, 1904.—Copy of Order made by the Secretary for Scotland, dated 15th May 1908, providing for the Early Closing of certain Shops in the Burgh of Govan [4 Edw. VII., c. 31, s. 3 (3)]	26 May	40 days

INDEX

TO THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

[AUTHORISED EDITION].

SEVENTH VOLUME OF SESSION 1908.

MAY 19—*JUNE* 2.

EXPLANATION OF ARRANGEMENT AND ABBREVIATIONS.

Bills: Read First, Second, or Third Time = 1R., 2R., 3R. [*c.*] = Commons. [*l.*] = Lords. *Amendt.* = Amendment. *Os.* = Observations. *Qs.* = Questions. *As.* = Answers. *Com.* = Committee. *Con.* = Consideration. *Rep.* = Report.

Where in the Index * is added with Reading of a Bill, or a Vote in Committee of Supply, it indicates that no Debate took place on that stage of the Bill, or on that Vote.

Subjects discussed in Committee of Supply are entered under their headings, and also under Members' Names, without reference to the actual Vote before the Committee.

Abraham, Mr. W. [Cork N.E.]
  Eustace Estate—Case of R. Ladd, *May 28*, 1245.
  Leader Estate—Case of Mrs. Nagle, *May 27*, 1112.

Access to Mountains (Scotland) Bill
  c. Order for Second Reading read and Bill withdrawn, *May 29*, 1439.

Achill Island
  Coastguards, Cost of living of.
    Q. Capt. Craig; *A.* Mr. McKenna, *June 1*, 1526.

Acland, Mr. F. D.—*Financial Secretary to the War Office* (Yorkshire, Richmond)
  Cadet Corps, Position under new Scheme, *June 2*, 1698.
  Council—Artillery Service of Members, *June 2*, 1698.
  Ordnance Factories, Boys, Discharge of, *May 19*, 70.
  Volunteers
    Grants, Payment of, *May 21*, 485.
    Long-service Medal, Award of, *May 20*, 275.
  Woolwich Arsenal Storehouse Clerks, Duties of, *May 20*, 275.

Acland-Hood, Right Hon. Sir A. [Somerset, Wellington]
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